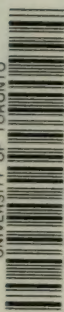


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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# HER INFINITE VARIETY

E·V·LUCAS







BY THE SAME AUTHOR

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

THE OPEN ROAD

THE FRIENDLY TOWN

THE GENTLEST ART

FIRESIDE AND SUNSHINE

CHARACTER AND COMEDY

LISTENER'S LURE

ALSO

OVER BEMERTON'S: An Easy-going  
Chronicle.



# HER INFINITE VARIETY

A  
Feminine  
Portrait Gallery

EDITED BY  
E. V. LUCAS



METHUEN & CO. 36 ESSEX STREET W.C. LONDON

F. G. BEDFORD.

THIRD EDITION

965-05-  
2/6/09

My daughter, Mrs. Holland, was confined three or four days ago of a little girl, and is doing very well. I am glad it is a girl; all the little boys ought to be put to death.

*Sydney Smith*

PN

6071

W7L78

1908

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*Second Edition . . . December 1908*  
*Third Edition . . . December 1908*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

"Ay, that's a lady!"

SLIGHTLY (in *Peter Pan*)

	PAGE
"IN THE BEGINNING —" . . . <i>F. W. Bain</i> . . .	I

## I. THE BUDS

EROTION . . . . .	<i>Leigh Hunt</i> . . .	3
THE WORLD'S LILY . . . . .	<i>Lord Tennyson</i> . . .	3
LOUISA . . . . .	<i>W. Wordsworth</i> . . .	4
LITTLE PRINCESS ANNE . . . . .	<i>Thomas Fuller</i> . . .	4
LITTLE MISS POPE . . . . .	" . . .	5
MISTRESS MARGARET HUSSEY . . . . .	<i>John Skelton</i> . . .	6
MISS CHARLOTTE PULTENEY . . . . .	<i>Ambrose Philips</i> . . .	7
MISTRESS MARY PRIDEAUX . . . . .	<i>William Strode</i> . . .	8
A YOUNG LADY FIVE MONTHS OLD . . . . .	<i>Winthrop M. Praed</i> . . .	9
NEIGHBOUR NELLY . . . . .	<i>Robert B. Brough</i> . . .	11
MARJORIE FLEMING . . . . .	<i>Dr. John Brown</i> . . .	12

## II. VIRGINAL

IANTHE . . . . .	<i>W. S. Landor</i> . . .	17
LUCY . . . . .	<i>John Ruskin</i> . . .	17
A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT . . . . .	<i>W. Wordsworth</i> . . .	19
THE MAIDEN OF THE LAKES . . . . .	<i>Hartley Coleridge</i> . . .	20
MARIAN . . . . .	<i>George Meredith</i> . . .	20

# Her Infinite Variety

## III. THE POETS AND THE IDEAL

	PAGE
THE LADY OF THE SONNETS . . . . . <i>W. Shakespeare</i>	22
BEN'S IDEAL . . . . . <i>Ben Jonson</i>	23
CASTARA . . . . . <i>William Habington</i>	23
CAMPION'S LADY . . . . . <i>Thomas Campion</i>	25
"MY DEAR MISTRESS" . . . . . <i>Earl of Rochester</i>	26
ROSALYNE . . . . . <i>Thomas Lodge</i>	26
SAMELA . . . . . <i>Robert Greene</i>	28
MY LUVE . . . . . <i>Robert Burns</i>	29
JULIA . . . . . <i>Robert Herrick</i>	29
THE SHEPHERD'S NYMPH . . . . . <i>Earl of Oxford</i>	30
DIAPHENIA . . . . . <i>H. Constable</i>	32
A LADY SWEET AND KIND . . . . . <i>Anon.</i>	33
CHERRY RIPE . . . . . <i>Thomas Campion</i>	33
A DESCRIPTION OF A MOST	
NOBLE LADY . . . . . <i>John Heywood</i>	34
THREE ROSES . . . . . <i>W. S. Landon</i>	37
MARGUERITE . . . . . <i>Matthew Arnold</i>	37
MY LOVE . . . . . <i>J. R. Lowell</i>	40
AMATURUS . . . . . <i>W. F. Cory</i>	41
MAUD . . . . . <i>Lord Tennyson</i>	43

## IV. A STATESMAN'S IDEAL

THE CHARACTER OF — . . . . . <i>Edmund Burke</i>	45
MRS. BURKE . . . . . <i>T. Macknight</i>	47

## V. A WEST-COUNTRY BEVY

THE MILK-MAID O' THE FARM . . . . . <i>William Barnes</i>	49
THE MAID VOR MY BRIDE . . . . . „	50
BLACKMWORE MAIDENS . . . . . „	52
MY LOVE IS GOOD . . . . . „	53
RUTH A-RIDÈN . . . . . „	54
THE DEVON MAID . . . . . <i>John Keats</i>	56

# Contents

## VI. DAUGHTERS OF ERIN

	PAGE
AN IRISH GIRL . . . . . <i>V. V. V.</i> . . . .	58
PEG OF LIMAVADDY . . . . . <i>W. M. Thackeray</i> . . . .	59
NORAH CREINA . . . . . <i>Thomas Moore</i> . . . .	65
THE STAR OF SLANE . . . . . <i>Anon.</i> . . . .	66
MRS. VESEY . . . . . <i>T. Macknight</i> . . . .	68
A THOROUGH-BRED . . . . . <i>X.</i> . . . .	69

## VII. THE TENDER NORTH

### ROBBIE'S SUM OF THE WHOLE

MATTER . . . . . <i>Robert Burns</i> . . . .	73
MISS JANE SCOTT . . . . . <i>John Gay</i> . . . .	75
BONNIE LESLEY . . . . . <i>Robert Burns</i> . . . .	75
MARY MORISON . . . . . „ . . . .	76
JEANIE MORRISON . . . . . <i>William Motherwell</i> . . . .	77
HIGHLAND MARY . . . . . <i>Robert Burns</i> . . . .	80
„ . . . . . <i>Joaquin Miller</i> . . . .	81
JEAN . . . . . <i>Robert Burns</i> . . . .	82

## VIII. WAYSIDE FLOWERS

THE GIRLS OF BETHLEHEM . . . . . <i>A. W. Kinglake</i> . . . .	84
FAYAWAY . . . . . <i>Herman Melville</i> . . . .	86
PHILLIS . . . . . <i>Drummond of Hawthornden</i> . . . .	88
MOLLY MOG . . . . . <i>John Gay</i> . . . .	89
THE ROMANY GIRL . . . . . <i>R. W. Emerson</i> . . . .	90
ANN . . . . . <i>Thomas de Quincey</i> . . . .	92



# Her Infinite Variety

	PAGE
MADAM LIBERALITY . . . . . <i>Mrs. Ewing</i> .	172
VISITOR . . . . . <i>W. E. Henley</i> .	175
LUCY LYTTLETON . . . . . <i>Anon.</i> .	176

## XV. MOTHERS

EVE . . . . . <i>John Milton</i> .	177
THE MOTHER OF MARCELLA . . . . . <i>Cervantes</i> .	178
A ROMAN WIFE . . . . . <i>T. E. Brown</i> .	178
DAME HESTER TEMPLE . . . . . <i>Thomas Fuller</i> .	179
A FORECAST . . . . . <i>W. Wordsworth</i> .	180
GEORGE HERBERT'S MOTHER . . . . . <i>John Donne</i> .	180
POPE'S MOTHER . . . . . <i>A. Pope</i> .	182
SUSANNA WESLEY . . . . . <i>Susanna Wesley</i> .	182
COWPER'S MOTHER . . . . . <i>William Cowper</i> .	185
A ROMAN MOTHER . . . . . <i>T. E. Brown</i> .	189

## XVI. THE WIFE PERFECT

## XVII. FAMILY FRIENDS

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS . . . . . <i>W. Shenstone</i> .	197
THE NURSE . . . . . <i>Katharine Tynan</i> .	200
PREW, HIS MAID . . . . . <i>Robert Herrick</i> .	201
ALISON CUNNINGHAM . . . . . <i>R. L. Stevenson</i> .	201
MISTRESS NICELY: A PATTERN FOR HOUSEKEEPERS . . . . . <i>Thomas Hood</i> .	202
SOPHY JOHNSTON . . . . . <i>Lord Cockburn</i> .	203

## XVIII. THE ADVENTURERS

LADY HESTER STANHOPE . . . . . <i>A. W. Kinglake</i> .	206
ISOPEL BERNERS . . . . . <i>George Borrow</i> .	208

# Contents

## XIX. THALIA AND MELPOMENE

	PAGE
A SINGING-GIRL . . . . <i>J. W. Mackail</i> . .	212
PEG WOFFINGTON . . . . <i>Anon.</i> . . . .	212
„ . . . . <i>David Garrick</i> . .	213
MRS. BRACEGIRDLE . . . . <i>Colley Cibber</i> . .	214
KITTY CLIVE . . . . <i>Various Writers</i> . .	214
MRS. SIDDONS . . . . <i>John Wilson</i> . .	216
„ . . . . <i>W. Hazlitt</i> . . . .	217
MRS. JORDAN . . . . <i>Leigh Hunt</i> . .	218
MRS. SHERIDAN . . . . <i>C. R. Leslie</i> . .	219
„ . . . . <i>Thomas Moore</i> . .	220
MALIBRAN . . . . <i>Fanny Kemble</i> . .	220
RACHEL . . . . „ . .	223
„ . . . . <i>Matthew Arnold</i> . .	224

## XX. ADDISON AND STEELE'S GALLERY

LEONORA . . . . <i>J. Addison</i> . .	227
CLARINDA . . . . „ . .	231
MRS. TRUELOVE . . . . „ . .	235
LIDDY . . . . <i>Sir R. Steele</i> . .	237
THE PERVERSE WIDOW . . . . „ . .	237
„ . . . . <i>J. Addison</i> . .	241

## XXI. DIANAS

JULIANA BERNERS . . . . <i>Thomas Fuller</i> . .	242
MRS. CARELESS . . . . <i>An Old South</i>	
„ . . . . <i>Downer</i> . .	243
MRS. DALYELL . . . . <i>Nimrod</i> . .	243



# Her Infinite Variety

## XXII. THE PARAGONS

	PAGE
THE LADY MARGARET LEY . . . . .	<i>John Milton</i> . . . 246
MRS. ANNE KILLIGREW . . . . .	<i>John Dryden</i> . . . 246
RACHEL, LADY RUSSELL . . . . .	<i>Bishop Burnet</i> . . . 250
” . . . . .	<i>Rachel, Lady Russell</i> 250
MRS. GODOLPHIN . . . . .	<i>John Evelyn</i> . . . 251
DOROTHY SELBY . . . . .	<i>Anon.</i> . . . . 254
ANN BAYNARD . . . . .	<i>Timothy Rogers</i> . . 254
LADY FITZGERALD . . . . .	<i>W. Wordsworth</i> . . 256
FRANCES DOBBS . . . . .	<i>Jeremy Taylor</i> . . 257
INCOGNITA . . . . .	<i>Anon.</i> . . . . 257

## XXIII. THE BLUES

MADGE NEWCASTLE . . . . .	<i>Herself</i> . . . . . 258
MARIA WYNDHAM . . . . .	<i>Anon.</i> . . . . 260
LYDIA WHITE . . . . .	<i>Wilfred Whitten</i> . . 262
THE BLUE STOCKINGS . . . . .	<i>Leigh Hunt</i> . . . 264
REGINA'S MAIDS OF HONOUR . . . . .	<i>Dr. Maginn</i> . . . 266
MISS HARRIET MARTINEAU . . . . .	” . . . . . 268
THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON . . . . .	<i>Leigh Hunt</i> . . . 270
LADY MORGAN . . . . .	<i>Dr. Maginn</i> . . . 270
MARIA EDGEWORTH . . . . .	<i>Leigh Hunt</i> . . . 271
MRS. NORTON . . . . .	<i>Fanny Kemble</i> . . . 271
LADY JOAN FITZ-WARENE . . . . .	<i>B. Disraeli</i> . . . 273
LITERARY LADIES . . . . .	<i>Joaquin Miller</i> . . 274

## XXIV. CHARACTERS

MRS. FREELAND . . . . .	<i>Anon.</i> . . . . 275
MRS. COTTON . . . . .	<i>Horace Walpole</i> . . 275
MRS. HOLMAN . . . . .	” . . . . . 276
ANOTHER WIDOW . . . . .	<i>Washington Irving</i> 276
THE MARCHIONESS OF HAMPSHIRE . . . . .	<i>B. Disraeli</i> . . . 277

# Contents

	PAGE
MRS. ELTON . . . . . <i>Jane Austen</i> . . .	278
THE WIDOW BLACKET . . . . . <i>Charles Lamb</i> . . .	283
MISS ANNE . . . . . <i>E. V. L.</i> . . .	285
MEG MERRILEES . . . . . <i>John Keats</i> . . .	289
GOOD AND BAD LUCK. . . . . <i>John Hay</i> . . .	290

## XXV. FRIENDS OF THE COURTLY

THE QUEEN OF JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND . . . . .	<i>James I. of Scotland</i> . . .	291
THE QUEEN OF BOHEMIA . . . . .	<i>Sir Henry Wotton</i> . . .	292
LADY JANE MAITLAND . . . . .	<i>W. Drummond</i> . . .	293
LUCY, COUNTESS OF BEDFORD . . . . .	<i>Ben Jonson</i> . . .	293
THE COUNTESS OF ANGLESEA . . . . .	<i>Sir William Davenant</i> . . .	294
MARY, LADY WROTH . . . . .	<i>Ben Jonson</i> . . .	294
LADY S—— . . . . .	<i>Thomas Carew</i> . . .	295
THE LADY ELIZABETH HASTINGS . . . . .	<i>W. Congreve</i> . . .	296
„ . . . . .	<i>Sir R. Steele</i> . . .	297
HOW AM I LIKE HER? . . . . .	<i>W. M. Praed</i> . . .	297
MRS. BIDDY FLOYD . . . . .	<i>Dean Swift</i> . . .	299
BELINDA . . . . .	<i>A. Pope</i> . . .	299

## XXVI. SAINTS

THE VIRGIN MARY . . . . .	<i>W. Caxton</i> . . .	300
SAINT EDGBURGH . . . . .	<i>Thomas Fuller</i> . . .	302
SAINT ZITA . . . . .	<i>Reginald Balfour</i> . . .	302
SAINT CECILIA . . . . .	<i>William Caxton</i> . . .	303
SAINT ELIZABETH . . . . .	„ . . .	303

# Her Infinite Variety

## XXVII. IMMORTAL SISTERS

	PAGE
MARY LAMB . . . . . <i>Charles Lamb</i>	307
DOROTHY WORDSWORTH . . . . . <i>W. Wordsworth</i>	310
„ . . . . . <i>S. T. Coleridge</i>	310
EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN . . . . . <i>Matthew Arnold</i>	311

## XXVIII. AUNTS AND GRANDMOTHERS

AUNTIE . . . . . <i>R. L. Stevenson</i>	314
AUNT CAROLINE . . . . . <i>Alfred Cochrane</i>	314
OLD AUNT MARY . . . . . <i>J. Whitcomb Riley</i>	317
THE AUNT . . . . . <i>J. G. Whittier</i>	320
AUNT ANNE . . . . . <i>Mrs. W. K. Clifford</i>	321
GRANNY . . . . . <i>J. Whitcomb Riley</i>	323
GRAMMER'S SHOES . . . . . <i>William Barnes</i>	325
MY GRANDMOTHER . . . . . <i>Frederick Locker</i>	326
A GENTLEWOMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL . . . . . <i>Austin Dobson</i>	328
BEAUTIFUL WOMEN . . . . . <i>Walt Whitman</i>	332
CHAUCEY'S PRAISE OF WOMEN . . . . . <i>Chaucer</i>	332

## XXIX. THE TYRANTS

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH . . . . . <i>Horace Walpole</i>	334
LADY CORK . . . . . <i>James Boswell</i>	334
„ . . . . . <i>Fanny Kemble</i>	335
MRS. DUNDAS . . . . . <i>Lord Cockburn</i>	337
LADY DON AND MRS. ROCHEAD OF INVERLEITH . . . . . <i>Lord Cockburn</i>	338
THE OLD SCOTTISH LADIES . . . . . <i>Dean Ramsay</i>	340
MISS MACNABB . . . . . „	342
MISS HELEN CARNEGIE . . . . . „	343

# Contents

	PAGE
LADY HOLLAND . . . . <i>Charles Greville</i> .	345
„ . . . . <i>Thomas Creevey</i> .	347

## XXX. DEAD LADIES

BALLADE OF DEAD LADIES . . . . <i>A. Lang</i> . .	349
CLAUDIA HOMONCEA . . . . <i>J. W. Mackail</i> .	350
ELIZABETH L. H. . . . . <i>Ben Jonson</i> . .	351
MARGARET RATCLIFFE . . . . „ . .	351
MARGARET . . . . . <i>W. Drummond</i> .	352
LADY MARIE . . . . . <i>William Strode</i> .	352
MRS. MARY NEUDHAM . . . . „ . .	353
LADY MARY VILLIERS. . . . <i>Thomas Carew</i> .	353
ANNE WALTON . . . . . <i>Anon.</i> . . .	354
MRS. MARGARET PASTON . . . . <i>John Dryden</i> .	354
MRS. CORBET . . . . . <i>A. Pope</i> . . .	355
TERNISSA . . . . . <i>W. S. Lander</i> .	355
ROSE AYLMER . . . . . „ . . .	356
HESTER . . . . . <i>Charles Lamb</i> .	356
UNDER THE VIOLETS . . . . <i>O. W. Holmes</i> .	357
MY KATE . . . . . <i>E. Barrett Brown-</i> <i>ing</i> . . . .	359
CHARLOTTE LOCKER . . . . <i>Frederick Locker</i> .	360
LADY LOUISA CONOLLY . . . . <i>Sir George T.</i> <i>Napier</i> . . . .	361

## CONCLUSION

ALMA MATER . . . . . <i>T. E. Brown</i> .	367
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WILL be buried with this inscription over me:  
"Here lies C. L., the Woman-hater"—I mean that  
hated One Woman: for the rest, God bless them,  
and when He makes any more, make 'em prettier.

*Charles Lamb*

# HER INFINITE VARIETY

## “IN THE BEGINNING —”

**I**N the beginning, when Twashtri came to the creation of woman, he found that he had exhausted his materials in the making of man, and that no solid elements were left.

In this dilemma, after profound meditation, he did as follows.

He took the rotundity of the moon, and the curves of creepers, and the clinging of tendrils, and the trembling of grass, and the slenderness of the reed, and the bloom of flowers, and the lightness of leaves, and the tapering of the elephant's trunk, and the glances of deer, and the clustering of rows of bees, and the joyous gaiety of sunbeams, and the weeping of clouds, and the fickleness of the winds, and the timidity of the hare, and the vanity of the peacock, and the softness of the parrot's bosom, and the hardness of adamant, and the sweetness of honey, and the cruelty of the tiger, and the warm glow of fire, and the coldness of snow, and the chattering of jays, and the cooing of the *kókila*, and the hypocrisy of the crane, and the fidelity of the *chakrawáka*; and compounding all these together, he made woman and gave her to man.

## Her Infinite Variety

But after one week, man came to him, and said : "Lord, this creature that you have given me makes my life miserable. She chatters incessantly, and teases me beyond endurance, never leaving me alone : and she requires incessant attention, and takes all my time up, and cries about nothing, and is always idle ; and so I have come to give her back again, as I cannot live with her."

So Twashtri said : "Very well :" and he took her back.

Then after another week, man came again to him, and said : "Lord, I find that my life is very lonely since I gave you back that creature. I remember how she used to dance and sing to me, and look at me out of the corner of her eye, and play with me, and cling to me ; and her laughter was music, and she was beautiful to look at, and soft to touch : so give her back to me again."

So Twashtri said : "Very well :" and gave her back again.

Then after only three days, man came back to him again, and said : "Lord, I know not how it is ; but after all, I have come to the conclusion that she is more of a trouble than a pleasure to me : so please take her back again."

But Twashtri said : "Out on you ! Be off ! I will have no more of this. You must manage how you can."

Then man said : "But I cannot live with her."

And Twashtri replied : "Neither could you live without her."

And he turned his back on man, and went on with his work.

Then man said : "What is to be done ? for I cannot live either with or without her."







*F. W. Bain*







# I

## THE BUDS

O, VERY beautiful are little girls,  
And goodly to the sight. *J. G. Saxe*

Erotion       

UNDERNEATH this greedy stone  
Lies little sweet Erotion ;  
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,  
Nipp'd away at six years old.  
Thou, whoever thou may'st be,  
That hast this small field after me,  
Let the yearly rites be paid  
To her little slender shade ;  
So shall no disease or jar  
Hurt thy house, or chill thy Lar ;  
But this tomb here be alone  
The only melancholy stone. *Leigh Hunt*

The World's Lily     

The dying Becket speaks)

THERE was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid  
Lived in my mother's house : if Rosamund is  
The world's rose, as her name imports her, she  
Was the world's lily. *Tennyson*

## Her Infinite Variety

Louisa

I MET Louisa in the shade ;  
And having seen that lovely maid,  
Why should I fear to say  
That she is ruddy, fleet, and strong ;  
And down the rocks can leap along,  
Like rivulets in May ?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown ;  
Smiles, that with motion of their own  
Do spread, and sink, and rise ;  
That come and go with endless play,  
And ever, as they pass away,  
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her cottage-home ;  
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam  
In weather rough and bleak ;  
And, when against the wind she strains,  
Oh, might I kiss the mountain rains,  
That sparkle on her cheek !

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"  
If I with her but half a noon  
May sit beneath the walls  
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,  
When up she winds along the brook  
To hunt the waterfalls.

*W. Wordsworth*

Little Princess Anne

ANNE, third daughter to King Charles the First and Queen Mary, was born at Saint James's, March 17, anno Domini 1637. She was a very Piegnant Lady

## The Buds

above her age, and died in her infancy when not full *four* years old. Being minded by those about her to call upon God even when the pangs of Death were upon her ; “ *I am not able,*” saith she, “ *to say my long prayer (meaning the Lord’s-prayer), but I will say my short one, Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, lest I sleep the sleep of death.*” This done, the little lamb gave up the ghost.

*Thomas Fuller*

Little Miss Pope



**K**ING JAMES came in Progress to the House of Sir William Pope, Knight, when his Lady was lately delivered of a daughter, which Babe was presented to King James with this paper of verses in her hand :—

“ See this little Mistress here,  
Did never sit in *Peter’s* chair,  
Or a triple Crown did wear,  
And yet she is a *Pope*.

No Benefice she ever sold,  
Nor did dispense with sins for Gold,  
She hardly is a Sevenight Old,  
And yet she is a *Pope*.

No King her feet did ever kiss,  
Or had from her worse look than this ;  
Nor did she ever hope,  
To saint one with a Rope,  
And yet she is a *Pope*.

A Female *Pope* you’l say ; a second *Joan* ?  
No, sure ; she is *Pope Innocent*, or none.”

*Thomas Fuller*

## Her Infinite Variety

Mistress Margaret Hussey



MERRY Margaret  
As midsummer flower,  
Gentle as falcon  
Or hawk of the tower :  
With solace and gladness,  
Much mirth and no madness,  
All good and no badness ;  
    So joyously,  
    So maidenly,  
    So womanly  
    Her demeaning  
    In everything,  
    Far, far passing  
    That I can indite,  
    Or suffice to write  
Of merry Margaret  
As midsummer flower,  
Gentle as falcon  
Or hawk of the tower.

As patient and still  
And as full of good will  
As fair Isaphill,  
Coliander,  
Sweet pomander,  
Good Cassander ;  
Steadfast of thought,  
Well made, well wrought,  
Far may be sought,  
Ere that ye can find  
So courteous, so kind,

## The Buds

As merry Margaret,  
This midsummer flower,  
Gentle as falcon  
Or hawk of the tower.

*John Skelton*

To Miss Charlotte Pulteney, in her mother's arms ♀

**T**IMELY blossom, infant fair,  
Fondling of a happy pair,  
Every morn and every night  
Their solicitous delight,  
Sleeping, waking, still at ease,  
Pleasing, without skill to please ;  
Little gossip, blithe and hale,  
Tattling many a broken tale,  
Singing many a tuneless song,  
Lavish of a heedless tongue.  
Simple maiden, void of art,  
Babbling out the very heart,  
Yet abandon'd to thy will,  
Yet imagining no ill,  
Yet too innocent to blush,  
Like the linnet in the bush,  
To the mother-linnet's note  
Moduling her slender throat,  
Chirping forth thy pretty joys,  
Wanton in the change of toys,  
Like the linnet green, in May,  
Flitting to each bloomy spray.  
Wearied then and glad of rest,  
Like the linnet in the nest.  
This thy happy present lot,  
This, in time, will be forgot ;

## Her Infinite Variety

Other pleasures, other cares,  
Ever-busy Time prepares ;  
And thou shalt in thy daughter see  
This picture once resembled thee

*Ambrose Philips*

Mistress Mary Prideaux



WEEP not because this childe hath dyed so yong,  
But weepe because yourselves have livd so  
long :

Age is not fild by growth of time, for then  
What old man lives to see th' estate of men?  
Who sees the age of grande Methusalem?  
Ten years make us as old as hundreds him.  
Ripenesse is from ourselves : and then wee dye  
When nature hath obteynde maturity.  
Summer and winter fruits there bee, and all  
Not at one time, but being ripe, must fall.  
Death did not erre : your mourners are beguilde ;  
She dyed more like a mother than a childe.  
Weigh the composure of her pretty parts :  
Her gravity in childhood ; all her arts  
Of womanly behaviour ; weigh her tongue  
So wisely measurde, not too short nor long ;  
And to her youth adde some few riches more,  
She tooke upp now what due was at threescore.  
She livd seven years, our age's first degree ;  
Journeys at first time ended happy bee ;  
Yet take her stature with the age of man,  
They well are fitted : both are but a span.

*William Strode*

## The Buds

A Young Lady five months old



MY pretty, budding, breathing flower,  
Methinks, if I to-morrow,  
Could manage, just for half an hour,  
Sir Joshua's brush to borrow,  
I might immortalise a few  
Of all the myriad graces  
Which Time, while yet they all are new,  
With newer still replaces.

I'd paint, my child, your deep-blue eyes,  
Their quick and earnest flashes ;  
I'd paint the fringe that round them lies,  
The fringe of long dark lashes ;  
I'd draw with most fastidious care  
One eyebrow, then the other,  
And that fair forehead, broad and fair,  
The forehead of your mother.

I'd oft retouch the dimpled cheek  
Where health in sunshine dances ;  
And oft the pouting lips, where speak  
A thousand voiceless fancies ;  
And the soft neck would keep me long,  
The neck, more smooth and snowy  
Than ever yet in schoolboy's song  
Had Caroline or Chloe.

Nor less on those twin rounded arms  
My new-found skill would linger,  
Nor less upon the rosy charms  
Of every tiny finger ;



## Her Infinite Variety

Nor slight the small feet, little one,  
So prematurely clever  
That, though they neither walk nor run,  
I think they'd jump for ever.

But then your odd endearing ways—  
What study e'er could catch them?  
Your aimless gestures, endless plays—  
What canvas e'er could match them?  
Your lively leap of merriment,  
Your murmur of petition,  
Your serious silence of content,  
Your laugh of recognition.

Here were a puzzling toil, indeed,  
For Art's most fine creations!—  
Grow on, sweet baby, we will need,  
To note your transformations,  
No picture of your form or face,  
Your waking or your sleeping  
But that which Love shall daily trace,  
And trust to Memory's keeping.

Hereafter, when revolving years  
Have made you tall and twenty,  
And brought you blended hopes and fears,  
And sighs and slaves in plenty,  
May those who watch our little saint  
Among her tasks and duties,  
Feel all her virtues hard to paint  
As now we deem her beauties.

*Winthrop M. Praed*

## The Buds

### Neighbour Nelly



I'M in love with neighbour Nelly,  
Though I know she's only ten,  
While, alas ! I'm eight-and-forty,—  
And the marriedest of men !  
I've a wife who weighs me double,  
I've three daughters all with beaus ;  
I've a son with noble whiskers,  
Who at me turns up his nose. . . .

She is tall, and growing taller,  
She is vigorous of limb :  
(You should see her play at cricket  
With her little brother Jim.)  
She has eyes as blue as damsons,  
She has pounds of auburn curls ;  
She regrets the game of leap-frog  
Is prohibited to girls.

I adore my neighbour Nelly ;  
I invite her in to tea :  
And I let her nurse the baby—  
All her pretty ways to see.  
Such a darling bud of woman,  
Yet remote from any teens,—  
I have learn't from baby Nelly  
What the girl's doll-instinct means.

Oh ! to see her with the baby !  
He adores her more than I,—  
How she choruses his crowing,—  
How she hushes every cry !

## Her Infinite Variety

How she loves to pit his dimples  
With her light forefinger deep,  
How she boasts to me in triumph,  
When she's got him off to sleep !

We must part, my neighbour Nelly,  
For the summers quickly flee ;  
And your middle-aged admirer  
Must supplanted quickly be.  
Yet as jealous as a mother,  
A distemper'd canker'd churl,  
I look vainly for the setting  
To be worthy such a pearl.

*Robert B. Brough*

Marjorie Fleming



SIR WALTER was in that house almost every day, and had a key, so in he and the hound went, shaking themselves in the lobby. "Marjorie! Marjorie!" shouted her friend, "where are ye, my bonnie wee croodlin doo?" In a moment a bright, eager child of seven was in his arms, and he was kissing her all over. Out came Mrs. Keith. "Come yer ways in, Wattie." "No, not now. I am going to take Marjorie wi' me, and you may come to your tea in Duncan Roy's sedan, and bring the bairn home in your lap." "Tak' Marjorie, and it *on-ding o' snaw*!" said Mrs. Keith. He said to himself, "On-ding—that's odd—that is the very word." "Hoot, awa! look here," and he displayed the corner of his plaid, made to hold lambs—(the true shepherd's plaid, consisting of two breadths sewed together, and

## The Buds

uncut at one end, making a poke or *cul de sac*). "Tak' yer lamb," said she, laughing at the contrivance, and so the Pet was first well happit up, and then put, laughing silently, into the plaid-neuk, and the shepherd strode off with his lamb,—Maida gambolling through the snow, and running races in his mirth.

Didn't he face "the angry airt," and make her bield his bosom, and into his own room with her, and lock the door, and out with the warm, rosy, little wifie, who took it all with great composure! There the two remained for three or more hours, making the house ring with their laughter; you can fancy the big man's and Maidie's laugh. Having made the fire cheery, he set her down in his ample chair, and standing sheepishly before her, began to say his lesson, which happened to be—"Ziccoty, diccoty, dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck wan, down the mouse ran, ziccoty, diccoty, dock." This done repeatedly till she was pleased, she gave him his new lesson, gravely and slowly, timing it upon her small fingers. . . .

He pretended to great difficulty, and she rebuked him with most comical gravity, treating him as a child. He used to say that when he came to Alibi Crackaby he broke down, and Pin-Pan, Musky-Dan, Tweedle-um Twoddle-um made him roar with laughter. He said *Musky-Dan* especially was beyond endurance, bringing up an Irishman and his hat fresh from the Spice Islands and odoriferous Ind; she getting quite bitter in her displeasure at his ill behaviour and stupidity.

Then he would read ballads to her in his own glorious way, the two getting wild with excitement over *Gil Morrice* or the *Baron of Smailholm*; and he would take her on his knee, and make her repeat Constance's speeches in *King John*, till he swayed to and fro sobbing

## Her Infinite Variety

his fill. Fancy the gifted little creature, like one possessed, repeating—

“For I am sick, and capable of fears,  
Oppressed with wrong, and therefore full of fears;  
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears;  
A woman, naturally born to fears.”

“If thou that bidst me be content, wert grim,  
Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,  
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious—.”

Or, drawing herself up “to the height of her great argument”—

“I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,  
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout.  
Here I and sorrow sit.”

Scott used to say that he was amazed at her power over him, saying to Mrs. Keith, “She's the most extraordinary creature I ever met with, and her repeating of Shakespeare overpowers me as nothing else does.” . . .

And we can imagine Scott, when holding his warm plump little playfellow in his arms, repeating his stately friend's [Wordsworth's] lines :—

“Loving she is, and tractable, though wild,  
And Innocence hath privilege in her,  
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes,  
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round  
Of trespasses, affected to provoke  
Mock chastisement and partnership in play.  
And as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,  
Not less if unattended and alone,  
Than when both young and old sit gathered round,  
And take delight in its activity,  
Even so this happy creature of herself  
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her  
Is blithe society; she fills the air  
With gladness and involuntary songs.”

## The Buds

But we will let her disclose herself. . . .

Here are bits from her Diary at Braehead:—"The day of my existence here has been delightful and enchanting. On Saturday I expected no less than three well made Bucks the names of whom is here advertised. Mr. Geo. Crakey (Craigie), and Wm. Keith and Jn. Keith—the first is the funniest of every one of them. Mr. Crakey and I walked to Crakyhall (Craigiehall) hand in hand in Innocence and matitation (meditation) sweet thinking on the kind love which flows in our tender hearted mind which is overflowing with majestic pleasure no one was ever so polite to me in the hole state of my existence. Mr. Craky you must know is a great Buck and pretty good-looking.

"I am at Ravelston enjoying nature's fresh air. The birds are singing sweetly—the calf doth frisk and nature shows her glorious face." . . .

"Yesterday I behave extremely ill in God's most holy church for I would never attend myself nor let Isabella attend which was a great crime for she often often tells me that when to or three are geathered together God is in the midst of them, and it was the very same Divil that tempted Job that tempted me I am sure ; but he resisted Satan though he had boils and many many other misfortunes which I have escaped. . . . I am now going to tell you the horrible and wretched plaege (plague) that my multiplication gives me you can't conceive it the most Devilish thing is 8 times 8 and 7 times 7 it is what nature itself cant endure." . . .

"My religion is greatly falling off because I dont pray with so much attention when I am saying my prayers, and my charecter is lost among the Braehead people. I hope I will be religious again—but as for regaining my charecter I despare for it." . . .

## Her Infinite Variety

Poor dear little sinner !—Here comes the world again : —“ In my travels I met with a handsome lad named Charles Balfour Esq., and from him I got offers of marriage —offers of marriage, did I say? Nay plenty heard me.” A fine scent for “breach of promise” ! . . .

“The *Newgate Calender* is very instructive” (!) “A sailor called here to say farewell ; it must be dreadful to leave his native country when he might get a wife ; or perhaps me, for I love him very much. But O I forgot, Isabella forbid me to speak about love.”

*Dr. John Brown*



## II

### VIRGINAL

Ianthe    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

FROM you, Ianthe, little troubles pass  
Like little ripples down a sunny river.  
Your pleasures spring like daisies in the grass,  
Cut down, and up again as blithe as ever.

*W. S. Landor*

Lucy    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THERE are two passages of that poet who is distinguished, it seems to me, from all others—not by power, but by exquisite *rightness*—which point you to the source, and describe to you, in a few syllables, the completion of womanly beauty. I will read the introductory stanzas, but the last is the one I wish you specially to notice :—

“ Three years she grew in sun and shower,  
Then Nature said, a lovelier flower  
On earth was never sown.  
This child I to myself will take ;  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A lady of my own.

## Her Infinite Variety

Myself will to my darling be  
Both law and impulse ; and with me  
    The girl, in rock and plain,  
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,  
Shall feel an overseeing power  
    To kindle, or restrain.

The floating clouds their state shall lend  
To her, for her the willow bend ;  
    Nor shall she fail to see  
Even in the motions of the storm,  
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form  
    By silent sympathy.

And *vital feelings of delight*  
Shall rear her form to stately height,—  
    Her virgin bosom swell.  
Such *thoughts* to Lucy I will give,  
While she and I together live,  
    Here in this happy dell."

"*Vital feelings of delight*," observe. There are deadly feelings of delight ; but the natural ones are vital, necessary to very life.

And they must be feelings of delight, if they are to be vital. Do not think you can make a girl lovely, if you do not make her happy. There is not one restraint you put on a good girl's nature—there is not one check you give to her instincts of affection or of effort—which will not be indelibly written on her features, with a hardness which is all the more painful because it takes away the brightness from the eyes of innocence, and the charm from the brow of virtue.

This for the means : now note the end. Take from the same poet, in two lines, a perfect description of womanly beauty—

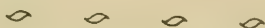
"A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet."

## Virginal

The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in that majestic peace, which is founded in the memory of happy and useful years,—full of sweet records ; and from the joining of this with that yet more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise ;—opening always—modest at once, and bright, with hope of better things to be won, and to be bestowed. There is no old age where there is still that promise—it is eternal youth.

*John Ruskin*

### A Phantom of Delight



HE was a Phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;  
A lovely Apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament ;  
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ;  
Like Twilight's too, her dusky hair ;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;  
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,  
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,  
A Spirit, yet a Woman too !  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin liberty ;  
A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;  
A Creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food ;  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

## Her Infinite Variety

And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine ;  
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A Traveller betwixt life and death ;  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,  
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, and command ;  
And yet a Spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel light.

*W. Wordsworth*

The Maiden of the Lakes    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

SHE is not fair to outward view  
As many maidens be ;  
Her loveliness I never knew  
Until she smiled on me.  
O then I saw her eye was bright,  
A well of love, a spring of light.

But now her looks are coy and cold,  
To mine they ne'er reply,  
And yet I cease not to behold  
The love-light in her eye :  
Her very frowns are fairer far  
Than smiles of other maidens are.

*Hartley Coleridge*

Marian    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

SHE can be as wise as we,  
And wiser when she wishes ;  
She can knit with cunning wit,  
And dress the homely dishes.

## Virginal

She can flourish staff or pen,  
And deal a wound that lingers  
She can talk the talk of men,  
And touch with thrilling fingers.

Match her ye across the sea,  
Natures fond and fiery ;  
Ye who zest the turtle's nest  
With the eagle's eyrie.  
Soft and loving is her soul,  
Swift and lofty soaring ;  
Mixing with its dove-like dole  
Passionate adoring.

Such as she, who'll match with me ?  
In flying or pursuing,  
Subtle wiles are in her smiles  
To set the world a-wooing.  
She is steadfast as a star,  
And yet the maddest maiden :  
She can wage a gallant war,  
And give the peace of Eden.

*George Meredith*

### III

## THE POETS AND THE IDEAL

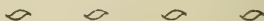
Her faults he knew not, love is always blind,  
But every charm revolv'd within his mind :  
Her tender age, her form divinely fair,  
Her easy motion, her attractive air,  
Her sweet behaviour, her enchanting face,  
Her moving softness, her majestic grace.

*A. Pope (after Chaucer)*

Sweet lips, this way !

*Matthew Arnold*

### The Lady of the Sonnets



SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day ?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate :  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date :  
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd ;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd ;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st ;

## The Poets and the Ideal

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

*W. Shakespeare*

Ben's Ideal

STILL to be neat, still to be drest,  
As you were going to a feast ;  
Still to be powder'd, still perfum'd :  
Lady, it is to be presum'd,  
Though art's hid causes are not found,  
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face  
That makes simplicity a grace ;  
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free :  
Such sweet neglect more taketh me  
Than all the adulteries of art :  
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

*Ben Jonson*

Castara

LIKE the violet which alone  
Prosper in some happy shade,  
My Castara lives unknown,  
To no looser eye betray'd,  
For she's to her self untrue  
Who delights i' th' public view.

## Her Infinite Variety

Such is her beauty as no arts  
Have enrich'd with borrowed grace ;  
Her high birth no pride imparts,  
For she blushes in her place.  
Folly boasts a glorious blood,  
She is noblest, being good.

Cautious, she knew never yet  
What a wanton courtship meant ;  
Nor speaks loud to boast her wit,  
In her silence eloquent :  
Of her self survey she takes,  
But 'tween men no difference makes.

She obeys with speedy will  
Her grave parents' wise commands ;  
And so innocent that ill  
She nor acts nor understands.  
Women's feet run still astray,  
If once to ill they know the way.

She sails by that rock, the Court,  
Where oft honour splits her mast :  
And retir'dness thinks the port,  
Where her fame may anchor cast :  
Virtue safely cannot sit  
Where vice is enthron'd for wit.

She holds that day's pleasure best  
Where sin waits not on delight ;  
Without mask, or ball, or feast,  
Sweetly spends a winter's night :  
For that darkness whence is thrust  
Prayer and sleep oft governs lust.



## The Poets and the Ideal

She her throne makes reason climb,  
While wild passions captive lie ;  
And each article of time,  
Her pure thoughts to Heaven fly :  
All her vows religious be,  
And her love she vows to me.

*William Habington*

### Campion's Lady



AND would you see my mistress' face ?  
It is a flowery garden place,  
Where knots of beauties have such grace  
That all is work and nowhere space.

It is a sweet delicious morn,  
Where day is breeding, never born :  
It is a meadow, yet unshorn,  
Which thousand flowers do adorn.

It is the heavens' bright reflex,  
Weak eyes to dazzle and to vex :  
It is th' Idea of her sex,  
Envy of whom doth worlds perplex.

It is a face of Death that smiles,  
Pleasing, though it kills the whiles :  
Where Death and Love in pretty wiles  
Each other mutually beguiles.

It is fair beauty's freshest youth,  
It is the feigned Elysium's truth :  
The spring, that winter'd hearts reneweth ;  
And this is that my soul pursueth.

*Thomas Campion*

## Her Infinite Variety

"My Dear Mistress"    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

MY dear mistress has a heart  
Soft as those kind looks she gave me ;  
When, with love's resistless art,  
And her eyes, she did enslave me ;  
But her constancy's so weak,  
She's so wild and apt to wander,  
That my jealous heart would break  
Should we live one day asunder.

Melting joys about her move,  
Killing pleasures, wounding blisses,  
She can dress her eyes in love,  
And her lips can arm with kisses ;  
Angels listen when she speaks,  
She's my delight, all mankind's wonder,  
But my jealous heart would break  
Should we live one day asunder.

*Earl of Rochester*

Rosalynne    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

LIKE to the clear in highest sphere,  
Where all imperial glory shines,  
Of selfsame colour is her hair,  
Whether unfolded or in twines ;  
Heigh ho, fair Rosalynne !  
Her eyes are sapphires set in snow,  
Refining heaven by every wink ;  
The gods do fear whenas they glow,  
And I do tremble when I think,  
Heigh ho, would she were mine !

## The Poets and the Ideal

Her cheeks are like the blushing cloud  
That beautifies Aurora's face,  
Or like the silver-crimson shroud  
That Phœbus' smiling looks doth grace ;  
Heigh ho, fair Rosalyne !  
Her lips are like two budded roses,  
Whom ranks of lilies neighbour nigh,  
Within whose bounds she balm encloses  
Apt to entice a deity.  
Heigh ho, would she were mine !








Her neck like to a stately tower,  
Where Love himself imprisoned lies  
To watch for glances every hour,  
From her divine and sacred eyes ;  
Heigh ho, fair Rosalyne !  
Her paps are centres of delight,  
Her breasts are orbs of heavenly frame,  
Where Nature moulds the dew of light,  
To feed perfection with the same.  
Heigh ho, would she were mine !

With Orient pearl, with ruby red,  
With marble white, with sapphire blue,  
Her body every way is fed,  
Yet soft in touch, and sweet in view ;  
Heigh ho, fair Rosalyne !  
Nature herself her shape admires,  
The gods are wounded in her sight,  
And Love forsakes his heavenly fires,  
And at her eyes his brand doth light.  
Heigh ho, would she were mine !

## Her Infinite Variety

Then muse not, Nymphs, though I bemoan  
The absence of fair Rosalyne ;  
Since for a fair there's fairer none,  
Nor for her virtues so divine,  
Heigh ho ! fair Rosalyne :  
Heigh ho ! my heart, would God that she  
were mine !

*Thomas Lodge*

Samela       

LIKE to Diana in her summer weed,  
Girt with crimson robe of brightest dye,  
Goes fair Samela ;  
Whiter than be the flocks that straggling feed,  
When washed by Arethusa Fount they lie,  
Is fair Samela ;  
As fair Aurora in her morning grey,  
Decked with the ruddy glister of her love,  
Is fair Samela ;  
Like lovely Thetis on a calmèd day,  
Whenas her brightness Neptune's fancy move,  
Shines fair Samela ;  
Her tresses gold, her eyes like glassy streams,  
Her teeth are pearl, the breasts are ivory  
Of fair Samela ;  
Her cheeks, like rose and lily, yield forth gleams,  
Her brow's bright arches framed of ebony,  
Thus fair Samela.  
Passeth fair Venus in her bravest hue,  
And Juno in the show of majesty,  
For she's Samela.

## The Poets and the Ideal

Pallas in wit ; all three, if you well view,  
For beauty, wit, and matchless dignity

Yield to Samela.

*Robert Greene*

My Luve

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
O MY Luve is like a red, red rose  
That's newly sprung in June :  
O my Luve is like the melodie  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I :  
And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry :

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun ;  
I will luve thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve !  
And fare thee weel awhile !  
And I will come again, my Luve,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

*Robert Burns*

Julia

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
YOU are a tulip seen to-day,  
But, dearest, of so short a stay,  
That where you grew scarce man can say.

## Her Infinite Variety

You are a lovely July flower,  
Yet one rude wind or ruffling shower  
Will force you hence, and in an hour.

You are a sparkling rose i' th' bud,  
Yet lost ere that chaste flesh and blood  
Can show where you or grew or stood.

You are a full-spread, fair-set vine,  
And can with tendrils love entwine,  
Yet dried ere you distil your wine.

You are like balm enclosed well  
In amber or some crystal shell,  
Yet lost ere you transfuse your smell

You are a dainty violet,  
Yet wither'd ere you can be set  
Within the virgin's coronet.

You are the queen all flowers among ;  
But die you must, fair maid, ere long,  
As he, the maker of this song.

*Robert Herrick*

### The Shepherd's Nymph



WHAT shepherd can express  
The favour of her face,  
To whom in this distress  
I do appeal for grace?  
A thousand Cupids fly  
About her gentle eye.

## The Poets and the Ideal

From which each throws a dart  
That kindleth soft sweet fire  
Within my sighing heart,  
Possessèd by desire ;  
    No sweeter life I try  
    Than in her love to die.

The lily in the field,  
That glories in his white,  
For pureness now must yield,  
And render up his right.  
    Heaven pictured in her face  
    Doth promise joy and grace.

Fair Cynthia's silver light  
That beats on running streams,  
Compares not with her white,  
Whose hairs are all sunbeams.  
    So bright my nymph doth shine  
    As day unto my eyne.

With this there is a red,  
Exceeds the damask-rose,  
Which in her cheeks is spread  
Where every favour grows ;  
    In sky there is no star  
    But she surmounts it far.

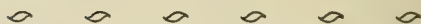
When Phœbus from the bed  
Of Thetis doth arise,  
The morning blushing red,  
In fair carnation-wise.  
    He shows in my nymph's face,  
    As queen of every grace.

## Her Infinite Variety

This pleasant lily white,  
This taint of roseate red,  
This Cynthia's silver light,  
This sweet fair Dea spread,  
    These sunbeams in mine eye,  
    These beauties make me die.

*Earl of Oxenford*

Diaphenia



**D**IAPHENIA, like the daffadowndilly,  
    White as the sun, fair as the lily,  
Heigho, how I do love thee !  
    I do love thee as my lambs  
    Are belovèd of their dams ;  
How blest were I if thou wouldst prove me !

Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,  
    That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,  
Fair sweet, how I do love thee !  
    I do love thee as each flower  
    Loves the sun's life-giving power ;  
For dead, thy breath to life might move me.

Diaphenia, like to all things blessèd  
    When all thy praises are expressèd,  
Dear joy, how I do love thee !  
    As the birds do love the Spring,  
    Or the bees their careful king :  
Then in requite, sweet virgin, love me !

*H. Constable*



## The Poets and the Ideal

A Lady Sweet and Kind      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

THERE is a Lady sweet and kind,  
Was never face so pleased my mind ;  
I did but see her passing by,  
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion, and her smiles,  
Her wit, her voice, my heart beguiles,  
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,  
And yet I love her till I die. . . .

Cupid is wingèd and doth range  
Her country so, my love doth change :  
But change she earth, or change she sky,  
Yet will I love her till I die.

*Anonymous*

Cherry Ripe      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

THERE is a garden in her face  
Where roses and white lilies grow ;  
A heavenly paradise is that place  
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow :  
There cherries grow which none may buy  
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose  
Of orient pearl a double row,  
Which when her lovely laughter shows,  
They look like rose-buds fill'd with snow ;  
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy  
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

## Her Infinite Variety

Her eyes like angels watch them still,  
Her brows like bended bows do stand,  
Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill  
All that attempt with eye or hand  
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,  
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

*Thomas Campion*

### A Description of a Most Noble Lady



Adviewed by John Heywood, presently ; who advertising her years, as face, saith of her thus, in much eloquent phrase :—

GIVE place, ye ladies ! all begone ;  
Show not yourselves at all.  
For why ? behold ! there cometh one  
Whose face yours all blank shall.

The virtue of her looks  
Excels the precious stone ;  
Ye need none other books  
To read, or look upon.

In each of her two eyes  
There smiles a naked boy ;  
It would you all suffice  
To see those lamps of joy.

If all the world were sought full far,  
Who could find such a wight ?  
Her beauty twinkleth like a star  
Within the frosty night.

Her colour comes and goes—  
With such a goodly grace,  
More ruddy than the rose—  
Within her lively face.

## The Poets and the Ideal

Amongst her youthful years  
    She triumphs over age ;  
And yet she still appears  
    Both witty, grave and sage.

I think nature hath lost her mould  
    Where she her form did take ;  
Or else I doubt that nature could  
    So fair a creature make.

She may be well compared  
    Unto the phœnix kind ;  
Whose like hath not been heard  
    That any now can find.

In life a Dian chaste ;  
    In truth Penelope ;  
In word and deed steadfast—  
    What need I more to say ?

At Bacchus' feast none may her meet ;  
    Or yet at any wanton play ;  
Nor gazing in the open street,  
    Or wandering, as astray.

The mirth that she doth use  
    Is mixed with shamefastness ;  
All vices she eschews,  
    And hateth idleness.

It is a world to see  
    How virtue can repair,  
And deck such honesty  
    In her that is so fair.

Great suit to vice may some allure  
    That thinks to make no fault ;  
We see a fort had need be sure  
    Which many doth assault.

## Her Infinite Variety

They seek an endless way  
That think to win her love ;  
As well they may assay  
The stony rock to move.

For she is none of those  
That sets store by evil fame ;  
She will not lightly lose  
Her truth and honest name.

How might we do to have a graff  
Of this unspotted tree ?  
For all the rest they are but chaff  
In praise of her to be.

She doth as far exceed  
These women, nowadays,  
As doth the flower the weed ;  
And more, a thousand ways.

This praise I shall her give  
When Death doth what he can ;  
Her honest name shall live  
Within the mouth of man.

This worthy lady to bewray—  
A king's daughter was she—  
Of whom John Heywood list to say,  
In such worthy degree.

And Mary was her name, sweet ye,  
With these graces indued ;  
At eighteen years so flourished she :  
So doth his mean conclude.

*John Heywood*

## The Poets and the Ideal

### Three Roses

WHEN the buds began to burst,  
Long ago, with Rose the First  
I was walking ; joyous then  
Far above all other men,  
Till before us up there stood  
Britonfery's oaken wood,  
Whispering, " Happy as thou art,  
Happiness and thou must part."  
Many summers have gone by  
Since a Second Rose and I  
(Rose from that same stem) have told  
This and other tales of old.  
She upon her wedding-day  
Carried home my tenderest lay ;  
From her lap I now have heard  
Gleeful, chirping, Rose the Third.  
Not for *her* this hand of mine  
Rhyme with nuptial wreath shall twine ;  
Cold and torpid it must lie,  
Mute the tongue, and closed the eye.

*W. S. Landor*

### Marguerite

LAUGH, my friends, and without blame  
Lightly quit what lightly came ;  
Rich to-morrow as to-day,  
Spend as madly as you may !  
I, with little land to stir,  
Am the exacter labourer.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

## Her Infinite Variety

But my Youth reminds me—"Thou  
Hast liv'd light as these live now :  
As these are, thou too wert such :  
Much hast had, hast squander'd much."  
Fortune's now less frequent heir,  
Ah ! I husband what's grown rare.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Young I said : "A face is gone  
If too hotly mused upon ;  
And our best impressions are  
Those that do themselves repair."  
Many a face I then let by,  
Ah ! is faded utterly.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Marguerite says : "As last year went,  
So the coming year'll be spent ;  
Some day next year, I shall be,  
Entering heedless, kiss'd by thee."  
Ah, I hope !—yet, once away,  
What may chain us, who can say ?  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint that lilac kerchief, bound  
Her soft face, her hair around ;  
Tied under the archest chin  
Mockery ever ambush'd in.  
Let the fluttering fringes streak  
All her pale, sweet-rounded cheek.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

## The Poets and the Ideal

Paint that figure's pliant grace  
As she towards me lean'd her face,  
Half refused and half resign'd,  
Murmuring : " Art thou still unkind ?"  
Many a broken promise then  
Was new made—to break again.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint those eyes, so blue, so kind,  
Eager tell-tales of her mind ;  
Paint, with their impetuous stress  
Of enquiring tenderness,  
Those frank eyes, where deep doth lie  
An angelic gravity.  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

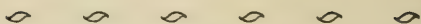
What, my Friends, these feeble lines  
Show, you say, my love declines ?  
To paint ill as I have done,  
Proves forgetfulness begun ?  
Time's gay minions, pleas'd you see,  
Time, your master, governs me ;  
Pleas'd, you mock the fruitless cry ;  
" Quick, thy tablets, Memory !"

Ah, too true ! Time's current strong  
Leaves us true to nothing long.  
Yet, if little stays with man,  
Ah, retain we all we can !  
If the clear impression dies,  
Ah, the dim remembrance prize !  
Ere the parting hour go by,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

*Matthew Arnold*

## Her Infinite Variety

My Love



NOT as all other women are  
Is she that to my soul is dear ;  
Her glorious fancies come from far,  
Beneath the silver evening-star,  
And yet her heart is ever near.

Great feelings hath she of her own,  
Which lesser souls may never know ;  
God giveth them to her alone,  
And sweet they are as any tone  
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,  
Although no home were half so fair ;  
No simplest duty is forgot ;  
Life hath no dim and lowly spot  
That doth not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,  
Which most leave undone, or despise ;  
For naught that sets one heart at ease,  
And giveth happiness or peace,  
Is low-esteemèd in her eyes.

She hath no scorn of common things,  
And, though she seem of other birth,  
Round us her heart intertwines and clings,  
And patiently she folds her wings,  
To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is ; God made her so,  
And deeds of week-day holiness  
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,  
Nor hath she ever chanced to know  
That aught were easier than to bless.



## The Poets and the Ideal

She is most fair, and thereunto  
Her life doth rightly harmonize ;  
Feeling or thought that was not true  
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue  
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

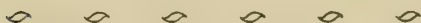
She is a woman ; one in whom  
The spring-time of her childish years  
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,  
Though knowing well that life hath room  
For many blights and many tears.

I love her with a love as still  
As a broad river's peaceful night,  
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,  
Seems following its own wayward will,  
And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,  
Like quiet isles my duties lie ;  
It flows around them and between,  
And makes them fresh, and fair, and green,  
Sweet homes wherein to live and die.

*J. R. Lowell*

Amaturus



SOMEWHERE beneath the sun,  
These quivering heart-strings prove it,  
Somewhere there must be one  
Made for this soul, to move it ;  
Some one that hides her sweetness  
From neighbours whom she slights,

## Her Infinite Variety

Nor can attain completeness,  
Nor give her heart its rights ;  
Some one whom I could court,  
With no great change of manner,  
Still holding reason's fort,  
Though waving fancy's banner ;  
A lady, not so queenly  
As to disdain my hand,  
Yet born to smile serenely  
Like those that rule the land ;  
Noble, but not too proud ;  
With soft hair simply folded,  
And bright face crescent-browed,  
And throat by Muses moulded ;  
And eyelids lightly falling  
On little glistening seas,  
Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,  
Though stirred by every breeze :  
Swift voice, like flight of dove  
Through minster arches floating,  
With sudden turns, when love  
Gets overnear to doting ;  
Keen lips, that shape soft sayings  
Like crystals of the snow,  
With pretty half-betrayings  
Of things one may not know ;  
Fair hair, whose touches thrill,  
Like golden rod of wonder,  
Which Hermes wields at will  
Spirit and flesh to sunder ;  
Light foot, to press the stirrup  
In fearlessness and glee,  
Or dance, till finches chirrup,  
And stars sink to the sea.

## The Poets and the Ideal

Forth, Love, and find this maid,  
Wherever she be hidden ;  
Speak, Love, be not afraid,  
But plead as thou art bidden ;  
And say, that he who taught thee  
His yearning want and pain,  
Too dearly, dearly bought thee  
To part with thee in vain.

*William Cory*

Maud    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

GO not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.  
When the happy Yes  
Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
O'er the blowing ships.  
Over blowing seas,  
Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
Blush it thro' the West ;  
'Till the red man dance  
By his red cedar-tree,  
And the red man's babe  
Leap, beyond the sea.

## Her Infinite Variety

Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.

*Lord Tennyson*

## IV

### A STATESMAN'S IDEAL

The Character of —      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

I INTEND to give my idea of a woman ; if it at all answers any original, I shall be pleased ; for if such a person as I would describe really exists, she must be far superior to my description : and such as I must love too well to be able to paint as I ought.

She is handsome, but it is a beauty not arising from features, from complexion, or from shape ; she has all three in a high degree, but it is not by these she touches an heart ; it is all that sweetness of temper, benevolence, innocence, and sensibility, which a face can express that forms her beauty.

She has a face that just raises your attention at first sight, it grows on you every moment, and you wonder it did no more than raise your attention at first.

Her eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she pleases ; they command like a good man out of office, not by authority but by virtue.

Her features are not perfectly regular ; that sort of exactness is more to be praised than to be loved ; for it is never animated.

## Her Infinite Variety

Her stature is not tall ; she is not made to be the admiration of everybody, but the happiness of one.

She has all the firmness that does not exclude delicacy : she has all the softness that does not imply weakness. . . .

There is often more of the coquette shown in an affected plainness than in a tawdry finery : she is always clean without preciseness or affectation.

Her gravity is a gentle thoughtfulness, that softens the features without discomposing them ; she is usually grave.

Her smiles are inexpressible.

Her voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in public assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a company from a crowd ; it has this advantage, you must come close to her to hear it.

To describe her body describes her mind ; one is the transcript of the other. Her understanding is not shown in the variety of matters it exerts itself on, but in the goodness of the choice she makes.

She does not display it so much in saying or doing striking things, as in avoiding such as she ought not to say or do.

She discovers the right and wrong of things not by reasoning but sagacity : most women, and many good ones, have a closeness and something selfish, in their dispositions ; she has a true generosity of temper ; the most extravagant cannot be more unbounded in their liberality, the most covetous not more cautious in the distribution.

No person of so few years can know the world better ; no person was ever less corrupted by that knowledge.

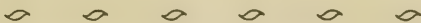
Her politeness seems to flow rather from a natural disposition to oblige, than from any rules on that subject ; and therefore never fails to strike those who understand good breeding and those who do not.

## A Statesman's Ideal

She does not run with a girlish eagerness into new friendships, which, as they have no foundation in reason, serve only to multiply and embitter disputes ; it is long before she chooses, but then it is fixed for ever ; and the first hours of romantic friendships are not warmer than hers after the lapse of years. As she never disgraces her good nature by severe reflections on any body, so she never degrades her judgment by immoderate or ill-placed praises ; for every thing violent is contrary to her gentleness of disposition and the evenness of her virtue ; she has a steady and firm mind, which takes no more from the female character than the solidity of marble does from its polish and lustre. She has such virtues as make us value the truly great of our own sex ; she has all the winning graces, that make us love even the faults we see in the weak and beautiful of hers.

*Edmund Burke*

Mrs. Burke



**B**UT whatever obscurity there may be hanging over this and other questions relating to Burke's early history, all letters and all anecdotes, all conjectures and all facts, agree in showing that the young lady, who in the twenty-third year of her age exchanged the name of Miss Nugent for that of Mrs. Edmund Burke, made one of the best of wives with which a man of genius was ever blessed.

She was not indeed what is called a regular beauty. But she was ever sweet and gentle in her disposition, and inexpressibly winning and graceful in her manners. Quiet, thoughtful, retiring, firm and decided in her principles, calm and considerate in all her actions, she

## Her Infinite Variety

knew the world, yet was not corrupted by it ; and though good-natured to everybody, her happiness was centred in her husband. The beautiful character which Burke drew of her on the thirteenth anniversary of their marriage reads like that of an ideal ; but stern men of the world, like Mr. Hardy and Sir Philip Francis, spoke of her as all that was beautiful and amiable among women ; and so shrewd a critic of her own sex as Miss Burney, and so good and severe a woman as Hannah More, have cordially given a similar testimony. A wife who could make such men and such women enthusiastically praise her virtue and her amiableness must have been virtuous and amiable indeed. She glides with Quaker calmness, and an almost saint-like beauty, through the agitating scenes of Burke's daily life, ever soothing his natural irritability by her natural gentleness, standing by his side in moments of despondency, cheering him in poverty, nursing him in sickness, consoling him in sorrow. Proud to live in the shadow of him whom she so devotedly loved, she confined herself almost exclusively to the home which for him she was so anxious to make happy ; and so unpretending indeed was she, that few of Burke's friends, except those who habitually visited at his house, had the slightest acquaintance with his wife, or even seemed to be aware of her existence. In that great lottery where domestic happiness is staked, Burke was thoroughly successful. Whatever may be his future troubles, it is much to remember that at his fireside there is and will be peace.

*T. Macknight*



## V

### A WEST-COUNTRY BEVY

The Milk-Maid o' the Farm    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

O POLL'S the milk-maid o' the farm !  
An' Poll's so happy out in groun'  
Wi' her white pail below her eärm  
As if she wore a goolden crown.

An' Poll don't zit up half the night,  
Nor lie vor half the day a-bed ;  
An' zoo her eyes be sparklèn bright  
An' zoo her cheäks be bloomèn red.

In Zummer mornens, when the lark  
Do rouse the litty lad an' lass  
To work, then she's the vu'st to mark  
Her steps along the dewy grass.

An' in the evenen, when the zun  
Do sheen ageän the western brows  
O' hills, where bubblen brooks do run,  
There she do zing beside her cows.

## Her Infinite Variety

An' ev'ry cow of hers do stand,  
An' never overzet her pail,  
Nor try to kick her nimble hand,  
Nor switch her wi' her heavy tail.

Noo lëady, wi' her muff an' vail,  
Do walk wi' sich a steätely tread  
As she do, wi' her milkèn pail  
A-balancèd on her comely head.

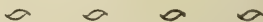
An' she, at mornen an' at night,  
Do skim the yollow cream, an' mwold  
An' wring her cheeses red and white,  
An' zee the butter vetch'd an' roll'd.

An' in the barken or the ground,  
The chaps do always do their best  
To milk the vu'st their own cows round,  
An' then help her to milk the rest.

Zoo Poll's the milk-maid o' the farm !  
An' Poll's so happy out in groun'  
Wi' her white pail below her eärm  
As if she wore a goolden crown.

*William Barnes*

## The Maid vor my Bride



A H ! don't tell o' maidens ! the woone vor my bride  
Is little lik' too many maidens beside,—  
Not brantèn, nor spitevul, nor wild ; she've a mind  
To think o' what's right, an' a heart to be kind.

## A West-Country Bevy

She's straight an' she's slender, but not over tall,  
Wi' lim's that be litsome, but not over small ;  
There's love-winnèn goodness a-shown in her feäce,  
An' queen, to be steätely, must walk wi' her peäce.

Her frocks be a-meäde all becomèn an' plaïn,  
An' cleän as a blossom undimm'd by a staïn ;  
Her bonnet ha' got but two ribbons, a-tied  
Up under her chin, or let down at her zide.

When she do speak to woone, she don't steäre an'  
grin,

There's sense in her looks, vrom her eyes to her chin,  
An' her words be so kind, an' her speech is so meek,  
As her eyes do look down a-beginnèn to speak.

Her skin is so white as a lily, an' each  
Ov her cheäks is so downy an' red as a peach ;  
She's pretty a-zittèn ; but oh ! how my love  
Do watch her to madness when woonce she do move.

An' when she do walk hwome vrom church drough the  
groun',

Wi' woone eärm in mine, an' wi' woone a-hung down,  
I do think, an' do veel mwore o' sheäme than o' pride,  
Do meäke me look ugly to walk by her zide.

Zoo don't talk o' maïdens ! the woone vor my bride  
Is but little lik' too many maïdens beside,—  
Not brantèn, nor spitevul, nor wild ; she've a mind  
To think o' what's right, an' a heart to be kind.

*William Barnes*

## Her Infinite Variety

Blackmwore Maidens



THE primrrose in the sheäde do blow,  
The cowslip in the zun,  
The thyme upon the down do grow,  
The clote where streams do run ;  
An' where do pretty maïdens grow  
An' blow, but where the tow'r  
Do rise among the bricken tuns,  
In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gaît,  
An' pretty feäces' smiles,  
A-trippen on so light o' waïght,  
An' steppèn off the stiles ;  
A-gwaïn to church, as bells do swing  
An' ring within the tow'r,  
You'd own the pretty maïdens' pleäce  
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,  
To Stower or Paladore,  
An' all the farmers' housen show'd  
Their dacters at the door ;  
You'd cry to bachelors at hwome—  
“ Here, come : 'ithin an hour  
You'll vind ten maïdens to your mind,  
In Blackmwore by the Stour.”

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door,  
To zee 'em in their pleäce,  
A-doèn housework up avore  
Their smilèn mothers' feäce,

## A West-Country Bevy

You'd cry—"Why, if a man would wive  
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,  
Then let en look en out a wife  
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

As I upon my road did pass  
A school-house back in Maj,  
There out upon the beäten grass  
Wer maidens at their play ;  
An' as the pretty souls did twile  
An' smile, I cried, "The flow'r  
O beauty, then, is still in bud  
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

*William Barnes*

My Love is Good



MY love is good, my love is feär,  
She's comely to behold, O,  
In ev'ry thing that she do wear,  
Altho' 'tis new or wold, O.  
My heart do leäp to see her walk,  
So sträight do step her veet, O,  
My tongue is dum' to hear her talk,  
Her vaice do sound so sweet, O.  
The flow'ry groun' wi' floor o' green  
Do bear but vew so good an' true.

When she do zit, then she do seem  
The feärest to my zight, O,  
Till she do stan' an' I do deem,  
She's feärest at her height, O.  
An' she do seem 'ithin a room  
The feärest on a floor, O,

## Her Infinite Variety

Till I ageän do zee her bloom  
Still feäirer out o' door, O,  
Where flow'ry groun' wi' floor o' green  
Do bear but vew so good an' true.

An' when the deäisies be a-press'd  
Below her vootsteps wäight, O,  
Do seem as if she look'd the best  
Ov all in walkèn gaît, O.  
Till I do zee her zit upright  
Behind the ho'se's neck, O,  
A-holdèn wi' the raïn so tight  
His tossèn head in check, O.  
Where flow'ry groun' wi' floor o' green  
Do bear but vew so good an' true.

I wish I had my own free land  
To keep a ho'se to ride, O,  
I wish I had a ho'se in hand  
To ride en at her zide, O.  
Vor if I wer as high in rank  
As any duke or lord, O,  
Or had the goold the richest bank  
Can shovel vrom his horde, O,  
I'd love her still, if even then  
She wer a leäser in a glen.

*William Barnes*

Ruth a-ridèn



**O**V all the roads that ever bridge  
Did bear athirt a river's feäce,  
Or ho'ses up an' down the ridge  
Did wear to doust at ev'ry peäce,

## A West-Country Bevy

I'll teäke the Sta'bridge leäne, to tread,  
By banks wi' primrrose-beds bespread,  
An' steätely elems over head,  
Where Ruth do come a-ridèn.

An' I would rise, when yields be grey  
Wi' mornèn dew, avore 'tis dry,  
An' beät the doust droughout the day  
To bluest hills ov all the sky ;  
If there avore the dusk o' night,  
The evenèn zun, a-sheenèn bright,  
Would päy my leäbours wi' the zight  
O' Ruth—O' Ruth a-ridèn.

Her healthy feäce, is rwozy feäir,  
She's comely in her gäit an' lim',  
An' sweet's the smile her feäce do wear,  
Below her cap's well-rounded brim ;  
An' while her skirt's a-spreadèn wide,  
In vwolds upon the ho'se's zide,  
He'll toss his head an' snort wi' pride,  
To trot wi' Ruth a-ridèn.

An' as her ho'se's rottlèn peäce  
Do slacken till his veet do beät  
A slower trot, an' till her feäce  
Do bloom avore the tollman's geäte ;  
Oh ! he'd be glad to open wide  
His high-back'd geäte, an' stand azide,  
A-given up his toll wi' pride,  
Vor zight o' Ruth a-ridèn.

An' oh ! that Ruth could be my bride,  
An' I had ho'ses at my will,  
That I mid teäke her by my zide,  
A-ridèn over dell an' hill ;

## Her Infinite Variety

I'd zet wi' pride her litty tooe  
'Ithin a stirrup sheenèn new,  
An' leäve all other jaÿs to goo  
Along wi' Ruth a-ridèn.

If maidens that be weäk an' peäle  
A-mwopèn in the house's sheäde,  
Would wish to be so blithe an' heäle  
As you did zee young Ruth a-meäde ;  
Then, though the zummer zun mid glow,  
Or though the winter win' mid blow,  
They'd leäp upon the saddle's bow,  
An' goo, lik' Ruth, a-ridèn.

While evenèn light do sofly gild  
The moss upon the elem's bark,  
Avore the zingen bird's a-still'd,  
Or woods be dim, or day is dark,  
Wi' quiv'rèn grass avore his breast,  
In cowslip beds, do lie at rest,  
The ho'se that now do goo the best  
Wi' rwozy Ruth a-ridèn.

*William Barnes*

### The Devon Maid



WHERE be ye going, you Devon maid ?  
And what have ye there in the Basket ?  
Ye tight little fairy just fresh from the dairy,  
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it ?

I love your meads, and I love your flowers,  
And I love your junkets mainly,  
But 'hind the door I love kissing more,  
O look not so disdainly.



## A West-Country Bevy

I love your hills, and I love your dales  
And I love your flocks a-bleating,  
But O, on the heather to lie together,  
With both our hearts a-beating !

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook,  
Your shawl I hang up on the willow,  
And we will sigh in the daisy's eye  
And kiss on a grass green pillow.  
*John Keats*

## VI

### DAUGHTERS OF ERIN

My Irish wife has clear blue eyes,  
My heaven by day, my stars by night—  
And twin-like, truth and fondness lies  
Within her swelling bosom white.  
My Irish wife has golden hair—  
Apollo's harp had once such strings—  
Apollo's self might pause to hear  
Her bird-like carol when she sings.

I would not give my Irish wife  
For all the dames of the Saxon land ;  
I would not give my Irish wife  
For the Queen of France's hand ;  
For she to me is dearer  
Than castles strong, or lands, or life—  
In death I would be near her,  
And rise beside my Irish wife.

*Thomas d'Arcy M'Gee*

An Irish Girl    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

NOT she alone is fair to view  
Whose classic beauty has no mar ;  
Illumined plainness sways us too,  
The glorified irregular !  
More comely e'en than symmetry  
The lack of it may sometimes be.

## Daughters of Erin

There was an Irish girl I knew—

I would not have one freckle changed,  
I would not have her grey eyes blue,  
Her lawless sunny hair arranged,  
I would not give her rustic mien  
For the distinction of a queen.

Less of St. James than of St. Giles

There was about her witchery :  
I think that she imprisoned smiles  
And every moment one leapt free ;  
And yet her forehead could express  
A truly awful seriousness !

Old Ireland's wrongs she throbbed to tell,

This wee, Home-ruling, patriot rogue,  
Whilst like a benediction fell

The restful music of her brogue ;  
For from her fierce antipathy  
To Saxons, she excepted me.

V. V. V.

Peg of Limavaddy



RIDING from Coleraine  
(Famed for lovely Kitty)

Came a Cockney bound

Unto Derry city ;

Weary was his soul,

Shivering and sad, he

Bumped along the road

Leads to Limavaddy.

Mountains stretch'd around,

Gloomy was their tinting,

And the horse's hoofs

Made a dismal clinting ;

## Her Infinite Variety

Wind upon the heath  
Howling was and piping,  
On the heath and bog,  
Black with many a snipe in.

'Mid the bogs of black  
Silver pools were flashing,  
Crows upon their sides  
Picking were and splashing.  
Cockney on the car  
Closer folds his plaidy,  
Grumbling at the road  
Leads to Limavaddy.

Through the crashing woods  
Autumn brawl'd and bluster'd,  
Tossing round about  
Leaves the hue of mustard ;  
Yonder lay Lough Foyle,  
Which a storm was whipping,  
Covering with mist  
Lake, and shores, and shipping.  
Up and down the hill  
(Nothing could be bolder)  
Horse went with a raw  
Bleeding on his shoulder.  
"Where are horses changed?"  
Said I to the laddy  
Driving on the box :  
"Sir, at Limavaddy."

Limavaddy inn's  
But a humble bait-house,  
Where you may procure  
Whiskey and potatoes ;

## Daughters of Erin

Landlord at the door  
Gives a smiling welcome  
To the shivering wights  
Who to his hotel come.  
Landlady within  
Sits and knits a stocking,  
With a wary foot  
Baby's cradle rocking.

To the chimney nook  
Having found admittance,  
There I watch a pup  
Playing with two kittens ;  
(Playing round the fire,  
Which of blazing turf is,  
Roaring to the pot  
Which bubbles with the murphies) ;  
And the cradle babe  
Fond the mother nursed it,  
Singing it a song,  
As she twists the worsted !

Up and down the stair  
Two more young ones patter  
(Twins were never seen  
Dirtier or fatter) ;  
Both have mottled legs,  
Both have snubby noses,  
Both have——Here the host  
Kindly interposes :  
“ Sure you must be froze  
With the sleet and hail, sir,  
So will you have some punch,  
Or will you have some ale, sir ? ”

## Her Infinite Variety

Presently a maid  
Enters with the liquor  
(Half a pint of ale  
Frothing in a beaker).  
Gads ! I didn't know  
What my beating heart meant,  
Hebe's self I thought  
Entered the apartment.  
As she came she smiled,  
And the smile bewitching,  
On my word and honour,  
Lighted all the kitchen !

With a curtesy neat  
Greeting the new comer,  
Lovely, smiling Peg  
Offers me the rummer ;  
But my trembling hand  
Up the beaker tilted,  
And the glass of ale  
Every drop I spilt it :  
Spilt it every drop  
(Dames, who read my volumes,  
Pardon such a word)  
On my what-d'ye-call-'ems !

Witnessing the sight  
Of that dire disaster,  
Out began to laugh  
Missis, maid, and master ;  
Such a merry peal  
'Specially Miss Peg's was  
(As the glass of ale  
Trickling down my legs was),

## Daughters of Erir

That the joyful sound  
Of that mingling lau<sup>ter</sup>  
Echoed in my ears  
Many a long day<sup>er</sup>.

Such a silver peal !  
In the meadows  
You who've heard<sup>stening</sup>,  
Ringing to a c<sup>he</sup> bells  
You who ever h<sup>ristening</sup> ;  
Caradori pre<sup>ard</sup>  
Smiling like a Y,  
Singing " C angel,  
Fancy Pegg<sup>ovineti</sup> " ;  
Sweet, an<sup>'s</sup> laugh,  
At my pan<sup>d</sup> clear, and cheerful,  
With ha<sup>aloons</sup>  
a pint of beer full !

When th<sup>i</sup>  
Peg, th<sup>e</sup> laugh was done,  
Moved a<sup>e</sup> pretty hussy,  
Won<sup>d</sup> about the room  
Now s<sup>l</sup>derfully busy ;  
If th<sup>e</sup> looks to see  
Now sh<sup>e</sup> kettle keep hot ;  
Now she cleans the teapot ;  
Now she sets the cups  
Trimly and secure :  
Now she scours a pot,  
And so it was I drew her.

Thus it was I drew her  
Scouring of a kettle,  
(Faith ! her blushing cheeks  
Redden'd on the metal !)

## Her Infinite Variety

But 'tis in vain  
That I try to sketch it ;  
Alas ! pot perhaps is like,  
That Peggy's face is wretched.  
The best of lead  
But of india-rubber  
No, it could depict  
And sweet kettle-scrubber !  
Never  
That low she moves,  
The ground she touches ;  
See her hair,  
Scarce as a duchess :  
Airy as a fluted arm,  
Graceful little leg is,  
Bare her round show'd  
Bare her little Peggy's ;  
Vestris never fair,  
Ankles like and modest,  
Braided is her waist  
Soft her look so daddied.  
Slim her little with  
Comfortably be  
daddy  
This I do declare can share  
Of Peggy's the navaddy ;  
Married if she were,  
Blest would be the daddy  
Of the children fair  
Of Peg of Limavaddy.  
Beauty is not rare  
In the land of Paddy,  
Fair beyond compare  
Is Peg of Limavaddy.



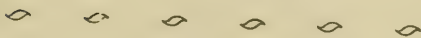
## Daughters of Erin

Citizen or Squire,  
Tory, Whig or Radi-  
-cal would all desire  
Peg of Limavaddy.  
Had I Homer's fire  
Or that of Sergeant Taddy,  
Meetly I'd admire  
Peg of Limavaddy.

And till I expire  
Or till I grow mad, I  
Will sing unto my lyre  
Peg of Limavaddy.

*W. M. Thackeray*

Norah Creina



**L**ESBIA hath a beaming eye,  
But no one knows for whom it beameth ;  
Right and left its arrows fly,  
But what they aim at, no one dreameth.  
Sweeter 'tis to gaze upon  
My Norah's lid, that seldom rises ;  
Few its looks, but every one,  
Like unexpected light, surprises.  
O, my Norah Creina dear,  
My gentle, bashful Norah Creina !  
Beauty lies  
In many eyes—  
But Love's in yours, my Norah Creina !

Lesbia wears a robe of gold ;  
But all so close the nymph hath laced it,  
Not a charm of beauty's mould  
Presumes to stay where Nature placed it.

## Her Infinite Variety

O, my Norah's gown for me,  
That floats as wild as mountain breezes,  
Leaving every beauty free  
To sink or swell as Heaven pleases.  
Yes, my Norah Creina dear !  
My simple, graceful Norah Creina !  
Nature's dress  
Is loveliness—

The dress you wear, my Norah Creina !

Lesbia hath a wit refin'd ;  
But when its points are gleaming round us,  
Who can tell if they're design'd  
To dazzle merely, or to wound us ?  
Pillow'd on my Norah's heart,  
In safer slumber Love reposes—  
Bed of peace ! whose roughest part  
Is but the crumpling of the roses.  
O, my Norah Creina dear !  
My mild, my artless Norah Creina !  
Wit, though bright,  
Hath no such light  
As warms your eyes, my Norah Creina !

*Thomas Moore*

The Star of Slane



YE brilliant muses, who ne'er refuses,  
But still infuses in the poet's mind,  
Your kind sweet favours to his endeavours,  
That his ardent labours should appear sublime ;  
Preserve my study from getting muddy,  
My idea's ready, so inspire my brain ;  
My quill refine, as I write each line,  
On a nymph divine called the Star of Slane.

## Daughters of Erin

In beauteous Spring, when the warblers sing,  
And their carols ring through each fragrant grove ;  
Bright Sol did shine, which made me incline  
By the River Boyne for to go to rove.

I was ruminating and meditating  
And contemplating as I paced the plain,  
When a charming fair, beyond compare,  
Did my heart ensnare near the town of Slane.

Had Paris seen this young maid serene,  
The Grecian Queen he would soon disdain,  
And straight embrace this virgin chaste,  
And peace would grace the whole Trojan plain.  
If ancient Cæsar could on her gaze, Sir,  
He'd stand amazed for to view this dame,  
Sweet Cleopatra he would freely part her,  
And his crown he'd barter for the Star of Slane.

There's Alexander, that famed commander,  
Whose triumphant standard it did conquer all,  
Who proved a victor over crowns and sceptres,  
And great warlike structures did before him fall ;  
Should he behold her, I will uphold, Sir,  
From pole to pole he would then proclaim,  
For the human race in all that wide space,  
To respect the chaste blooming Star of Slane.

To praise her beauty then is my duty,  
But alas ! I'm footy in this noble part,  
And to my sorrow, sly Cupid's arrow,  
Full deep did burrow in my tender heart ;  
In pain and trouble yet I will struggle,  
Though sadly hobbled by my stupid brain,  
Yet backed by Nature I can tell each feature  
Of this lovely creature called the Star of Slane.

## Her Infinite Variety

Her eyes it's true are an azure blue,  
And her cheeks the hue of the crimson rose ;  
Her hair behold it doth shine like gold,  
And is finely rolled and so nicely grows ;  
Her skin is white as the snow by night,  
Straight and upright is her supple frame,  
The chaste Diana, or fair Susanna,  
Are eclipsed in grandeur by the Star of Slane.

Her name to mention it might cause contention,  
And it's my intention for to breed no strife ;  
For me to woo her I am but poor,  
I'm deadly sure she won't be my wife ;  
In silent anguish I here must languish  
Till time does banish all my lovesick pain,  
And my humble station I must bear with patience,  
Since great exaltation suits the Star of Slane.

*Anon.*

Mrs. Vesey



MRS. MONTAGUE always endeavoured to give the law, and to be the first person at her table, loaded with the most weighty plate, and in her drawing-room, decorated with the most costly magnificence, where every visitor sat studiously ranged according to his rank or celebrity. Mrs. Vesey, determined that all her friends should be at their ease, would allow of no exclusive circle, and permitted every one to walk, saunter, lounge, or sit, according to pleasure. Never presuming to lead the conversation, she only thought of entertaining her guests. With a thoroughly Irish temperament, she was ever committing the most ridiculous blunders. Being afflicted

## Daughters of Erin

with deafness, she had generally a reserve of speaking trumpets on her wrists, about her neck, or on the nearest mantelpiece, and would fly desperately from one talker to another, eager to hear the conversation ; and, on being too late, would exclaim, " Well ! I really thought you were talking of something ! " or when these disappointments became more frequent, " I can't conceive why it is that nobody talks to-night. I can't catch a word. " " Don't mind your dress ! Come in your blue stockings ! " she had answered to a gentleman whom she was inviting to one of her evening entertainments, years ago, at Bath ; and hence arose the word blue-stocking, though the meaning it afterwards popularly assumed was however more justly derived from the associations of Mrs. Montague's numerous and ambitious meetings. Mrs. Vesey, with other innumerable peculiarities, was also remarkable for a very short memory. As she was speaking one day, with much indignation, against ladies who married a second time, her attention was politely called to the fact of Mr. Vesey being her second husband. She rejoined, with astonishment, " Bless me ! my dear, I had quite forgotten it. "

*T. Macknight*

A Thorough-Bred



**S**PRUNG from a famous north-country stock transplanted three centuries ago into Ireland, she is pure-bred through many generations, and shows it. A little under the middle height, but perfectly shaped and proportioned, she bears herself so beautifully, and if need be so proudly, that showier women seem rustic or insignificant beside her. Or is it less the distinction of her carriage that has this effect, than the keen edge and

## Her Infinite Variety

exquisite finish of her form and features? Or is it rather the atmosphere and effluence of essential womanhood that surround her? Or the vividness of the inner light that shines through her? Her face is the transparent vesture of her spirit, and her looks a true mirror of the poignancy and integrity of her feelings. Her features are large and noble, and modelled with the last subtlety of refinement ; at the same time they are tinted with the ebb and flow of so delicate a blood, and change so swiftly and harmoniously with the motions of her mind, that it is by play of expression even more than by purity of design that they charm and haunt you.

Her voice adds to persuasion candour, and to candour kindness, in evidence which receives, although it needs not, a sure corroboration in her eyes. Waiting for her smile is the most delightful of anticipations, and when it comes it is always dearer than you remembered, and irradiates all who are in her company with happiness. When she sings, the full richness of her spirit passes into her utterance, and those who hear her are transported. Such power upon others has not come to her without the discipline of extreme suffering. By nature sensitively impatient, swift, and proud, she has had to bear a double and treble share not only of life's cares but of its agonies. They have strained her strength but not her courage, and left their mark, but only in a beautiful underlying sadness which enriches and makes sacred all her mirth. For mirthful she can still be ; fun and mischief still lurk unquenchably in those faithful eyes ; the youngest has not so young a laugh as she, and she will still leap in her chair and clap hands with childish glee (and nothing becomes her better) at the anticipation of any simple gift or pleasure.

As for the higher pleasures of art and nature, her

## Daughters of Erin

presence enhances them inexpressibly. In the illumination of beautiful things, she seems to reflect and grow one with them; without pretension or affectation of criticism, she takes into herself their very essence, which becomes part thenceforward of the affluence of her being. When she hears the best music (and she will hear none but the best) every lineament of her countenance is transfigured. Her friends not only learn in her company how to enjoy, but in her absence no very choice experience can befall them but of her they will be reminded, and to her involuntarily give thanks for the best part of what they feel.

But life itself is most truly of all her sphere. She has the genius of the heart, and in her own spirit a blend of sensitiveness and high honour and fortitude which makes of her a priceless counsellor. Comfort abounds when she is by: something bids all who are not ungentle, men, women, and children, turn to her and trust her. She cools and soothes your secret smart before ever you can name it; she divines and shares your hidden joy, or shames your fretfulness with loving laughter: she unravels the perplexities of your conscience, and finds out something better in you than you knew of; she fills you not only with generous resolutions but with power to persist in what you have resolved.

In the fearlessness of her purity she can afford the frankness of her affections, and shows how every fascination of her sex may in the most open freedom be the most honourably secure. Yet in a world of men and women, such an one cannot walk without kindling once and again a dangerous flame before she is aware. As in her nature there is no room for vanity, she never foresees these masculine combustions, but has a wonderful art and gentleness in allaying them, and is accustomed to

## Her Infinite Variety

convert the claims and cravings of passion into the life-long loyalty of grateful and contented friendship.

With her own sex she is the soul of loyalty, and women love and trust her even more devotedly than men. She loves to be loved, and likes to be praised ; but no amount of love or praise can make her believe that there is much remarkable about her. If she could read this testimony to her worth she would be both pleased and moved, but between smiles and tears, and somewhat of a loving shame, would remain unconvinced though the deposition should be borne by him who, owing her whatever he is worth, has the best right to speak, and witnessed by all the rest who, sharing the treasure of her friendship, surround her with their just allegiance in the next degree.

X.



## VII

### THE TENDER NORTH

Though from the North the damsel came,  
All Spring is in her breast,  
Her skin is of the driven snow,  
But sun-shine all the rest.

*Anon.*

Robbie's Sum of the Whole Matter    ♪    ♪    ♪

THERE'S nought but care on every han',  
In every hour that passes, O !  
What signifies the life of man,  
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,  
Are spent amang the lasses, O !

The warly race may riches chase,  
And riches still may fly them, O !  
And tho' at last they catch them fast,  
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O !

## Her Infinite Variety

Green grow the rashes, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,  
Are spent among the lasses, O !

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,  
My arms about my deary, O !  
And warly cares and warly men  
May all gang tapsalteerie, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,  
Are spent among the lasses, O !

For you sae douse, wha sneer at this,  
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O !  
The wisest man the warld e'er saw,  
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,  
Are spent among the lasses, O !

Auld Nature swears the lovely dears  
Her noblest wark she classes, O !  
Her prentice han' she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
Green grow the rashes, O !  
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,  
Are spent among the lasses, O !

*Robert Burns*

## The Tender North

Miss Jane Scott

THE Welsh girl is pretty,  
The English girl fair,  
The Irish deem'd witty,  
The French *débonnaire* ;  
Though all may invite me,  
I'd value them not ;  
The charms that delight me  
I find in a Scott.

*John Gay*

Bonnie Lesley

O SAW ye bonnie Lesley  
As she gaed ower the border ?  
She's gane, like Alexander,  
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,  
And love but her for ever ;  
For nature made her what she is,  
And never made anither !

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,  
Thy subjects we, before thee ;  
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,  
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The deil he couldna scaith thee,  
Or aught that wad belang thee ;  
He'd look into thy bonnie face,  
And say " I canna wrang thee ! "

## Her Infinite Variety

The Powers aboon will tent thee ;  
Misfortune sha' na steer thee ;  
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely  
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,  
Return to Caledonie !  
That we may brag we hae a lass  
There's nane again sae bonnie.

*Robert Burns*

Mary Morison



O MARY, at thy window be,  
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour !  
Those smiles and glances let me see  
That make the miser's treasure poor :  
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,  
A weary slave frae sun to sun,  
Could I the rich reward secure,  
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string  
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',  
To thee my fancy took its wing,—  
I sat, but neither heard nor saw :  
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,  
And yon the toast of a' the town,  
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',  
“Ye are na Mary Morison.”

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace  
Wha for thy sake wad gladly dee ?  
Or canst thou break that heart of his,  
Whase only faut is loving thee ?

## The Tender North

If love for love thou wilt na gie,  
At least be pity to me shown ;  
A thought ungentle canna be  
The thought o' Mary Morison.

*Robert Burns*

Jeanie Morrison



I'VE wandered east, I've wandered west,  
Through many a weary way ;  
But never, never can forget  
The luvie o' life's young day !  
The fire that's blawn on Beltane e'en,  
May weel be black 'gin Yule ;  
But blacker fa' awaits the heart  
Where first fond luvie grows cule.

O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,  
The thochts o' bygone years  
Still fling their shadows ower my path,  
And blind my een wi' tears :  
They blind my een wi' saut, saut tears,  
And sair and sick I pine,  
As memory idly summons up  
The blythe blinks o' langsyne.

'Twas then we luvit ilk ither weel,  
'Twas then we twa did part ;  
Sweet time—sad time ! twa bairns at scule,  
Twa bairns, and but ae heart !  
'Twas then we sat on ae laigh bink,  
To leir ilk ither lear ;  
And tones and looks and smiles were shed,  
Remembered evermair.

## Her Infinite Variety

I wonder, Jeanie, aften yet,  
When sitting on that bink,  
Cheek touchin' cheek, loof lock'd in loof,  
What our wee heads could think?  
When baith bent doun ower ae braid page,  
Wi' ae buik on our knee,  
Thy lips were on thy lesson, but  
My lesson was in thee.

Oh, mind ye how we hung our heads,  
How cheeks brent red wi' shame,  
Whene'er the scule-weans laughin' said,  
We cleek'd thegither hame?  
And mind ye o' the Saturdays  
(The scule then skailt at noon),  
When we ran aff to speel the braes—  
The broomy braes o' June?

My head rins round and round about,  
My heart flows like a sea,  
As ane by ane the thochts rush back  
O' scule-time and o' thee.  
O mornin' life! O mornin' luve!  
O lichtsome days and lang,  
When hinnied hopes around our hearts  
Like simmer blossoms sprang!

Oh mind ye, luve, how aft we left  
The deavin' dinsome toun,  
To wander by the green burnside,  
And hear its waters croon?  
The simmer leaves hung ower our heads,  
The flowers burst round our feet,  
And in the gloamin' o' the wood  
The throssil whusslit sweet;—

## The Tender North

The throssil whusslit in the wood,  
The burn sang to the trees,  
And we, with Nature's heart in tune,  
Concerted harmonies ;  
And on the knowe abune the burn  
For hours thegither sat  
In the silentness o' joy, till baith  
Wi' very gladness grat.

Ay, ay, dear Jeanie Morrison,  
Tears trinkled doun your cheek,  
Like dew-beads on a rose, yet nane  
Had ony power to speak !  
That was a time, a blessed time,  
When hearts were fresh and young,  
When freely gushed all feelings forth,  
Unsyllabled, unsung !

I marvel, Jeanie Morrison,  
Gin I hae been to thee  
As closely twined wi' earliest thochts  
As ye hae been to me ?  
Oh, tell me gin their music fills  
Thine ear as it does mine ;  
Oh, say gin e'er your heart grows grit  
Wi' dreamings o' langsyne ?

I've wandered east, I've wandered west,  
I've borne a weary lot ;  
But in my wanderings far or near  
Ye never were forgot.  
The fount that first burst frae this heart  
Still travels on its way ;  
And channels deeper as it rins,  
The luve o' life's young day.

## Her Infinite Variety

O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,  
Since we were sindered young,  
I've never seen your face, nor heard  
The music o' your tongue ;  
But I could hug all wretchedness,  
And happy could I dee,  
Did I but ken your heart still dreamed  
O' bygone days and me !

*William Motherwell*

Highland Mary



I

YE banks and braes and streams around  
The castle o' Montgomery  
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,  
Your waters never drumlie :  
There simmer first unfauld her robes,  
And there the langest tarry ;  
For there I took the last fareweel  
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,  
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,  
As underneath their fragrant shade  
I clasped her to my bosom !  
The golden hours on angel wings  
Flew o'er me and my dearie ;  
For dear to me as light and life  
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow and locked embrace  
Our parting was fu' tender ;  
And pledging aft to meet again,  
We tore oursel's asunder ;



## The Tender North

But, oh ! fell death's untimely frost,  
That nipt my flower sae early !  
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,  
That wraps my Highland Mary.

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,  
I aft hae kissed sae fondly !  
And closed for aye the sparkling glance  
That dwelt on me sae kindly ;  
And mouldering now in silent dust  
That heart that lo'ed me dearly !  
But still within my bosom's core  
Shall live my Highland Mary.

*Robert Burns*

### II

*September* 18, 1870. In the sunset to-day, as I walked out for the last time toward the tomb of Highland Mary, I met a whole line of splendid Scotch lassies with sheaves of wheat on their heads and sickles on their arms. Their feet were bare, their legs were bare to the knees. Their great strong arms were shapely as you can conceive ; they were tall, and their lifted faces were radiant with health and happiness. I stepped aside in the narrow road to enjoy the scene and let them pass. They were going down the sloping road toward some thatched cottages by the sea ; I toward the mountains. How beautiful ! I uncovered my head as I stepped respectfully aside. But giving the road to women here seems unusual, and one beautiful girl, with hair like the golden sheaves she carried, came up to me, talked and laughed and bantered in words that I could not understand, much as I wanted to. . . . And then the beautiful picture

## Her Infinite Variety

moved on. O Burns, Burns, come back to the banks  
of bonny Doon ! It is worth while.

How beautiful she was ! Why, she  
Was inspiration. She was born  
To walk God's summer-hills at morn,  
Nor waste her by the cold North Sea.  
What wonder, that her soul's white wings  
Beat at the bars, like living things ?

I know she sighed, and wandered through  
The fields alone, and ofttime drew  
Her hand above her head, and swept  
The lonesome sea, and ever kept  
Her face to sea, as if she knew  
Some day, some near or distant day,  
Her destiny should come that way.

*Joaquin Miller*

Jean



OF a' the airts the wind can blaw  
I dearly like the West,  
For there the bonnie lassie lives,  
The lassie I lo'e best :  
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,  
And mony a hill between ;  
But day and night my fancy's flight  
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,  
I see her sweet and fair :  
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,  
I hear her charm the air :

## The Tender North

There's not a bonnie flower that springs  
By fountain, shaw, or green,  
There's not a bonnie bird that sings  
But minds me o' my Jean.

O blaw ye westlin winds, blaw soft  
Amang the leafy trees ;  
Wi' balmy gale, frae hill and dale  
Bring hame the laden bees ;  
And bring the lassie back to me  
That's aye sae neat and clean ;  
Ae blink o' her wad banish care,  
Sae charming is my Jean.

What sighs and vows amang the knowes  
Hae pass'd atween us twa !  
How fond to meet, how wae to part  
The day she gaed awa !  
The Powers aboon can only ken  
To whom the heart is seen,  
That nane can be sae dear to me  
As my sweet lovely Jean !

*Robert Burns*

## VIII

### WAYSIDE FLOWERS

The Girls of Bethlehem



SO, I say, when you see, and hear them, those romping girls of Bethlehem will gladden your very soul. Distant at first, and then nearer and nearer the timid flock will gather around you with their large burning eyes gravely fixed against yours, so that they see into your brain, and if you imagine evil against them they will know of your ill thought before it is yet well born, and will fly and be gone in the moment. But presently, if you will only look virtuous enough to prevent alarm, and vicious enough to avoid looking silly, the blithe maidens will draw nearer and nearer to you, and soon there will be one, the bravest of the sisters, who will venture right up to your side, and touch the hem of your coat in playful defiance of the danger, and then the rest will follow the daring of their youthful leader, and gather close round you, and hold a shrill controversy on the wondrous formation that you call a hat, and the cunning of the hands that clothed you with cloth so fine; and then, growing more profound in their researches, they will pass from the study of your mere dress to a serious

## Wayside Flowers

contemplation of your stately height, and your nut-brown hair, and the ruddy glow of your English cheeks. And if they catch a glimpse of your ungloved fingers, then again will they make the air ring with their sweet screams of delight and amazement, as they compare the fairness of your hand with the hues of your sunburnt face, or with their own warmer tints ; instantly the ringleader of the gentle rioters imagines a new sin ; with tremulous boldness she touches—then grasps your hand, and smoothes it gently betwixt her own, and prys curiously into its make and colour, as though it were silk of Damascus, or shawl of Cashmere. And when they see you even then, still sage, and gentle, the joyous girls will suddenly, and screamingly, and all at once, explain to each other that you are surely quite harmless and innocent—a lion that makes no spring—a bear that never hugs—and upon this faith, one after the other, they will take your passive hand, and strive to explain it, and make it a theme, and a controversy. But the one—the fairest, and the sweetest of all, is yet the most timid ; she shrinks from the daring deeds of her playmates, and seeks shelter behind their sleeves, and tries to screen her glowing consciousness from the eyes that look upon her ; but her laughing sisters will have none of this cowardice—they vow that the fair one *shall* be their complice—*shall* share their dangers—*shall* touch the hand of the stranger ; they seize her small wrist, and drag her forward by force, and at last, whilst yet she strives to turn away, and to cover up her whole soul under the folds of downcast eyelids, they vanquish her utmost strength—they vanquish her utmost modesty, and marry her hand to yours. The quick pulse springs from her fingers, and throbs like a whisper upon your listening palm. For an instant her large timid eyes are upon you—in an instant they are shrouded again,

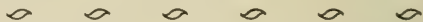
## Her Infinite Variety

and there comes a blush so burning that the frightened girls stay their shrill laughter, as though they had played too perilously, and harmed their gentle sister. A moment, and all with a sudden intelligence turn away, and fly like deer, yet soon again like deer they wheel round and return, and stand, and gaze upon the danger, until they grow brave once more.

“I regret to observe that the removal of the moral restraint imposed by the presence of the Mahometan inhabitants has led to a certain degree of boisterous, though innocent levity, in the bearing of the Christians, and more especially in the demeanour of those who belong to the younger portion of the female population, but I feel assured that a more thorough knowledge of the principles of their own pure religion will speedily restore these young people to habits of propriety, even more strict than those which were imposed upon them by the authority of their Mahometan brethren.” Bah ! thus you might chaunt, if you chose ; but loving the truth, you will not so disown sweet Bethlehem—you will not disown, nor dissemble your right good hearty delight, when you find, as though in a Desert, this gushing spring of fresh, and joyous girlhood.

*A. W. Kinglake*

Fayaway



FROM the rest of these, however, I must except the beauteous nymph Fayaway, who was my peculiar favourite. Her free pliant figure was the very perfection of female grace and beauty. Her complexion was a rich and mantling olive, and when watching the glow upon her cheeks I could almost swear that beneath the transparent medium there lurked the blushes of a faint

## Wayside Flowers

vermilion. The face of this girl was a rounded oval, and each feature as perfectly formed as the heart or imagination of man could desire. Her full lips, when parted with a smile, disclosed teeth of a dazzling whiteness ; and when her rosy mouth opened with a burst of merriment, they looked like the milk-white seeds of the "arta," a fruit of the valley, which, when cleft in twain, shows them reposing in rows on either side, imbedded in the rich and juicy pulp. Her hair of the deepest brown, parted irregularly in the middle, flowed in natural ringlets over her shoulders, and whenever she chanced to stoop, fell over and hid from view her lovely bosom. Gazing into the depths of her strange blue eyes, when she was in a contemplative mood, they seemed most placid yet unfathomable ; but when illuminated by some lively emotion, they beamed upon the beholder like stars. The hands of Fayaway were as soft and delicate as those of any countess ; for an entire exemption from rude labour marks the girlhood and even prime of a Typee woman's life. Her feet, though wholly exposed, were as diminutive and fairly shaped as those which peep from beneath the skirts of a Lima lady's dress. The skin of this young creature, from continued ablutions and the use of mollifying ointments, was inconceivably smooth and soft.

I may succeed, perhaps, in particularising some of the individual features of Fayaway's beauty, but that general loveliness of appearance which they all contributed to produce I will not attempt to describe. The easy unstudied graces of a child of nature like this, breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer, and nurtured by the simple fruits of the earth ; enjoying a perfect freedom from care and anxiety, and removed effectually from all injurious tendencies, strike the eye

## Her Infinite Variety

in a manner which cannot be portrayed. This picture is no fancy sketch ; it is drawn from the most vivid recollections of the person delineated.

Fayaway—I must avow the fact—for the most part clung to the primitive and summer garb of Eden. But how becoming the costume ! It showed her fine figure to the best possible advantage ; and nothing could have been better adapted to her peculiar style of beauty. On ordinary occasions she was habited precisely as I have described the two youthful savages whom we had met on first entering the valley. At other times, when rambling among the groves, or visiting at the houses of her acquaintances, she wore a tunic of white tappa, reaching from her waist to a little below the knees ; and when exposed for any length of time to the sun, she invariably protected herself from its rays by a floating mantle of the same material, loosely gathered about the person. Her gala dress will be described hereafter.

Though in my eyes, at least, Fayaway was indisputably the loveliest female I saw in Typee, yet the description I have given of her will in some measure apply to nearly all the youthful portion of her sex in the valley. Judge ye then, reader, what beautiful creatures they must have been.

*Herman Melville*

Phillis    ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪

IN petticoat of green  
With hair about her een,  
Phillis, beneath an oak,  
Sat milking her fair flock :  
'Mongst that sweet-strained moisture (rare delight)  
Her hand seemed milk, in milk it was so white.

*Drummond of Hawthornden*



## Wayside Flowers

Molly Mog, or the Fair Maid of the Inn      ♪      ♪

SAYS my uncle, "I pray you discover  
What hath been the cause of your woes,  
Why you pine and you whine like a lover?"

"I have seen Molly Mog of the Rose."

"O, nephew! your grief is but folly,  
In town you may find better prog;  
Half-a-crown there will get you a Molly,  
A Molly much better than Mog."

"I know that by wits 'tis recited  
That women at best are a clog;  
But I am not so easily frightened  
From loving of sweet Molly Mog."

"The school-boys' desire is a play-day,  
The school-masters' joy is to flog  
The milk-maids' delight is on May-day,  
But mine is on sweet Molly Mog."

"Will-a-wisp leads the trav'ller a-gadding  
Thro' ditch, and thro' quagmire, and bog;  
But no light can set me a-madding  
Like the eyes of my sweet Molly Mog."

"For guineas in other men's breeches  
Your gamesters will palm and will cog;  
But I envy them none of their riches,  
So I may win sweet Molly Mog."

"The heart when half wounded is changing,  
It here and there leaps like a frog;  
But my heart can never be ranging,  
'Tis so fix'd upon sweet Molly Mog. . .

## Her Infinite Variety

"I feel I'm in love to distraction,  
My senses all lost in a fog ;  
And nothing can give satisfaction  
But thinking of sweet Molly Mog.

"A letter when I am inditing,  
Comes Cupid and gives me a jog,  
And fills all the paper with writing  
Of nothing but sweet Molly Mog.

"If I would not give up the three Graces,  
I wish I were hang'd like a dog,  
And at Court all the drawing-room faces,  
For a glance of my sweet Molly Mog.

"Those faces want nature and spirit,  
And seem as cut out of a log ;  
Juno, Venus, and Pallas's merit  
Unite in my sweet Molly Mog. . . .

"Were Virgil alive with his Phillis,  
And writing another Eclogue ;  
Both his Phillis and fair Amaryllis  
He'd give up for sweet Molly Mog."

*John Gay*

## The Romany Girl



THE sun goes down, and with him takes  
The coarseness of my poor attire ;  
The fair moon mounts, and aye the flame  
Of Gypsy beauty blazes higher.

## Wayside Flowers

Pale Northern girls ! you scorn our race ;  
You captives of your air-tight halls,  
Wear out indoors your sickly days,  
But leave us the horizon walls.

And if I take you, dames, to task,  
And say it frankly without guile,  
Then you are Gypsies in a mask,  
And I the lady all the while.

If, on the heath, below the moon,  
I court and play with paler blood,  
Me false to mine dare whisper none,  
One sallow horseman knows me good.

Go, keep your cheek's rose from the rain,  
For teeth and hair with shopmen deal ;  
My swarthy tint is in the grain,  
The rocks and forest know it real.

The wild air bloweth in our lungs,  
The keen stars twinkle in our eyes,  
The birds gave us our wily tongues,  
The panther in our dances flies.

You doubt we read the stars on high,  
Nathless we read your fortunes true ;  
The stars may hide in the upper sky,  
But without glass we fathom you.

*R. W. Emerson*

## Her Infinite Variety

Ann      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

ANOTHER person there was, at that time, whom I have since sought to trace, with far deeper earnestness, and with far deeper sorrow at my failure. This person was a young woman, and one of that unhappy class who belong to the outcasts and pariahs of our female population. I feel no shame, nor have any reason to feel it, in avowing that I was then on familiar and friendly terms with many women in that unfortunate condition. Smile not, reader too carelessly facile! Frown not, reader too unseasonably austere! Little call was there here either for smiles or frowns. . . .

For many weeks I had walked, at nights, with this poor friendless girl up and down Oxford Street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticos. She could not be so old as myself: she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. . . .

One night, when we were pacing slowly along Oxford Street, and after a day when I had felt unusually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho Square. Thither we went; and we sat down on the steps of a house, which to this hour I never pass without a pang of grief, and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble act which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sat, I grew much worse. I had been leaning my head against her bosom, and all at once I sank from her arms, and fell backwards on the steps. From the sensations I then had, I felt an inner conviction of the liveliest kind, that, without some powerful and reviving

## Wayside Flowers

stimulus, I should either have died on the spot, or should, at least, have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all re-ascent, under my friendless circumstances, would soon have become hopeless. Then it was, at this crisis of my fate, that my poor orphan companion, who had herself met with little but injuries in this world, stretched out a saving hand to me. Uttering a cry of terror, but without a moment's delay, she ran off into Oxford Street, and in less time than could be imagined, returned to me with a glass of port-wine and spices, that acted upon my empty stomach (which at that time would have rejected all solid food) with an instantaneous power of restoration; and for this glass the generous girl, without a murmur, paid out of her own humble purse, at a time, be it remembered, when she had scarcely wherewithal to purchase the bare necessities of life, and when she could have no reason to expect that I should ever be able to reimburse her. O youthful benefactress! how often in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love—how often have I wished that, as in ancient times the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power, and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfilment, even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative; might have power given it from above to chase, to haunt, to waylay, to pursue thee into the central darkness of a London brothel, or (if it were possible) even into the darkness of the grave, there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation! . . .

I suppose that, in the literal and unrhetoical use of the word *myriad*, I must, on my different visits to

## Her Infinite Variety

London, have looked into many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting Ann. I should know her again amongst a thousand, and if seen but for a moment. Handsome she was not; but she had a sweet expression of countenance, and a peculiarly graceful carriage of the head. I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years; but now I should fear to see her; and her cough, which grieved me when I parted with her, is now my consolation. Now I wish to see her no longer, but think of her, more gladly, as one long since laid in the grave—in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen; taken away before injuries and cruelty had blotted out and transfigured her ingenuous nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun.

*Thomas de Quincey*

## IX

### THE HEROINES

Godiva ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

*G*ODIVA. My husband, my husband ! Will you pardon the city ?

*Leofric.* Sir bishop ! I could not think you would have seen her in this plight. Will I pardon ? Yea, Godiva, by the holy rood, I will pardon the city, when thou ridest naked at noontide through the streets.

*Godiva.* O my dear cruel Leofric, where is the heart you gave me ? It was not so ! Can mine have hardened it ?

*Bishop.* Earl, thou abashest thy spouse ; she turneth pale and weepeth. Lady Godiva, peace be with thee.

*Godiva.* Thanks, holy man ! peace will be with me when peace is with your city. Did you hear my lord's cruel words ?

*Bishop.* I did, lady.

*Godiva.* Will you remember it, and pray against it ?

*Bishop.* Wilt thou forget it, daughter ?

*Godiva.* I am not offended.

*Bishop.* Angel of peace and purity !

*Godiva.* But treasure it up in your heart : deem it an incense, good only when it is consumed and spent,

## Her Infinite Variety

ascending with prayer and sacrifice. And now what was it?

*Bishop.* Christ save us ! that he will pardon the city when thou ridest naked through the streets at noon.

*Godiva.* Did he not swear an oath?

*Bishop.* He sware by the holy rood.

*Godiva.* My Redeemer ! Thou hast heard it ! Save the city !

*Leofric.* We are now upon the beginning of the pavement : these are the suburbs : let us think of feasting ; we may pray afterward : to-morrow we shall rest.

*Godiva.* No judgments then to-morrow, Leofric ?

*Leofric.* None : we will carouse.

*Godiva.* The saints of heaven have given me strength and confidence : my prayers are heard : the heart of my beloved is now softened.

*Leofric (aside).* Ay, ay—they shall smart, though.

*Godiva.* Say, dearest Leofric, is there indeed no other hope, no other mediation ?

*Leofric.* I have sworn : besides, thou hast made me redden and turn my face away from thee, and all the knaves have seen it ; this adds to the city's crime.

*Godiva.* I have blushed too, Leofric, and was not rash nor obdurate.

*Leofric.* But thou, my sweetest, art given to blushing : there is no conquering it in thee. I wish thou hadst not alighted so hastily and roughly ; it hath shaken down a sheaf of thy hair ; take heed thou sit not upon it, lest it anguish thee. Well done ! it mingleth now sweetly with the cloth of gold upon the saddle, running here and there, as if it had life and faculties and business, and were working there upon some newer and cunninger device. O my beauteous Eve ! there is a Paradise



## The Heroines

about thee ! the world is refreshed as thou movest and breathest on it. I cannot see or think of evil where thou art. I could throw my arms even here about thee. No signs for me ! no shaking of sunbeams ! no reproof or frown or wonderment—I *will* say it—now then for worse—I could close with my kisses thy half-open lips, ay, and those lovely and loving eyes, before the people.

*Godiva.* To-morrow you shall kiss me, and they shall bless you for it. I shall be very pale, for to-night I must fast and pray.

*Leofric.* I do not hear thee ; the voices of the folk are so loud under this archway.

*Godiva (to herself).* God help them ! good kind souls ! I hope they will not crowd about me so to-morrow. O Leofric ! could my name be forgotten ! and yours alone remembered ! But perhaps my innocence may save me from reproach ! and how many innocent are in fear and famine ! No eye will open on me but fresh from tears. What a young mother for so large a family ! Shall my youth harm me ! Under God's hand it gives me courage. Ah, when will the morning come ! ah, when will the noon be over !

*W. S. Landor*

P.S. The story of Godiva, at one of the festivals or fairs [at which] I was present in my boyhood, has always interested me ; and I wrote a poem on it, sitting, I remember, by the *square pool* at Rugby. When I showed it to a friend in whom I had most confidence, he began to scoff at the subject ; and on his reaching the last line his laughter was loud and immoderate.

This conversation has brought both laughter and stanza back to me, and the earnestness with which I entreated and implored my friend *not to tell the lads* ;

## Her Infinite Variety

so heart-strickenly and desperately was I ashamed. The verses are these, if any one else should wish another laugh at me :—

In every hour, in every mood,  
O lady, it is sweet and good  
To bathe the soul in prayer ;  
And at the close of such a day,  
When we have ceased to bless and pray,  
To dream on thy long hair.

May the peppermint be still growing on the bank in that place !

W. S. L.

Joan of Arc    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

### I

WHAT is to be thought of *her*? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that—like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judea—rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good-will*, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendour and a noon-day

## The Heroines

prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of the invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent; no! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges of *thy* truth, that never once—no, not for a moment of weakness—didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honour from man. Coronets for thee! Oh no! Honours, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood. Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee. Cite her by the apparitors to come and receive a robe of honour, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country, thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short; and the sleep which is in the grave is long; let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long! This pure creature—pure from every

## Her Infinite Variety

suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious—never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not in vision, the aerial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but there, until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints;—these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard forever.

Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sat upon it: but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sat upon it, was for *her*; but, on the contrary, that she was for *them*; not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France, and for centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until in another century the wrath of God and man combined to wither them; but well Joanna knew, early at Domrémy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for *her*. Flower nor bud, bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for *her*.

*Thomas de Quincey*

### II

THE honour of a loyal boy,  
The courage of a paladin,  
With maiden's mirth, the soul of joy,  
These dwelt her happy breast within.

## The Heroines

From shame, from doubt, from fear, from sin,  
As God's own angels was she free ;  
Old worlds shall end, and new begin  
To be,

Ere any come like her who fought  
For France, for freedom, for the King ;  
Who counsel of redemption brought  
Whence even the armed Archangel's wing  
Might weary sore in voyaging ;  
Who heard her Voices cry " Be free ! "  
Such Maid no later human spring  
Shall see !

Saints Michael, Catherine, Margaret,  
Who sowed the seed that Thou must reap,  
If eyes of angels may be wet,  
And if the Saints have leave to weep,  
In Paradise one pain they keep,  
Maiden ! one mortal memory,  
One sorrow that can never sleep  
For thee !

*Andrew Lang*

Madame Roland



### I

**A**MONG whom, courting no notice, and yet the notablest of all, what queen-like Figure is this ; with her escort of house-friends and Champagneux the Patriot Editor ; come abroad with the earliest ? Radiant with enthusiasm are those dark eyes, is that strong Minerva-face, looking dignity and earnest joy ; joyfulest

## Her Infinite Variety

she where all are joyful. It is Roland de la Platrière's Wife! Strict elderly Roland, King's Inspector of Manufactures here; and now likewise, by popular choice, the strictest of our new Lyons Municipals: a man who has gained much, if worth and faculty be gain; but, above all things, has gained to wife Phlipon the Paris Engraver's daughter. Reader, mark that queenlike burgher-woman: beautiful, Amazonian-graceful to the eye; more so to the mind. Unconscious of her worth (as all worth is), of her greatness, of her crystal clearness; genuine, the creature of Sincerity and Nature, in an age of Artificiality, Pollution and Cant; there, in her still completeness, in her still invincibility, *she*, if thou knew it, is the noblest of all living Frenchwomen,—and will be seen, one day. O, blessed rather while *unseen*, even of herself! For the present she gazes, nothing doubting, into this grand theatricality; and thinks her young dreams are to be fulfilled.

### II

A FAR nobler Victim follows; one who will claim remembrance from several centuries: Jeanne-Marie Phlipon, the Wife of Roland. Queenly, sublime in her uncomplaining sorrow, seemed she to Riouffe in her Prison. "Something more than is usually found in the looks of women painted itself," says Riouffe, "in those large black eyes of hers, full of expression and sweetness. She spoke to me often, at the Grate: we were all attentive round her, in a sort of admiration and astonishment; she expressed herself with a purity, with a harmony and prosody that made her language like music, of which the ear could never have enough. Her conversation was serious, not cold; coming from the

## The Heroines

mouth of a beautiful woman, it was frank and courageous as that of a great man. And yet her maid said : ‘ Before you, she collects her strength ; but in her own room, she will sit three hours sometimes leaning on the window, and weeping.’ ” She has been in Prison, liberated once, but recaptured the same hour, ever since the first of June : in agitation and uncertainty ; which has gradually settled down into the last stern certainty, that of death. In the Abbaye Prison, she occupied Charlotte Corday’s apartment. Here in the Conciergerie, she speaks with Riouffe, with Ex-Minister Clavière ; calls the beheaded Twenty-two “ *Nos amis*, our Friends,”—whom we are soon to follow. During these five months, those *Memoirs* of hers were written, which all the world still reads.

But now, on the 8th of November, “ clad in white,” says Riouffe, “ with her long black hair hanging down to her girdle,” she is gone to the Judgment-bar. She returned with a quick step ; lifted her finger, to signify to us that she was doomed : her eyes seemed to have been wet. Fouquier-Tinville’s questions had been “ brutal ; ” offended female honour flung them back on him, with scorn, not without tears. And now, short preparation soon done, she too shall go her last road. There went with her a certain Lamarche, “ Director of Assignat-printing ; ” whose dejection she endeavoured to cheer. Arrived at the foot of the scaffold, she asked for pen and paper, “ to write the strange thoughts that were rising in her : ” a remarkable request ; which was refused. Looking at the Statue of Liberty which stands there, she says bitterly : “ O Liberty, what things are done in thy name ! ” For Lamarche’s sake, she will die first ; show him how easy it is to die : “ Contrary to the order,” said Samson.—“ Pshaw, you cannot refuse the last request of a Lady ; ” and Samson yielded.



## Her Infinite Variety

Noble white Vision, with its high queenly face, its soft proud eyes, long black hair flowing down to the girdle ; and as brave a heart as ever beat in woman's bosom ! Like a white Grecian Statue, serenely complete, she shines in that black wreck of things ;—long memorable. Honour to great Nature who, in Paris City, in the Era of Noble-Sentiment and Pompadourism, can make a Jeanne Phlipon, and nourish her to clear perennial Womanhood, though but on Logics, *Encyclopédies*, and the Gospel according to Jean-Jacques ! Biography will long remember that trait of asking for a pen “to write the strange thoughts that were rising in her.” It is as a little light-beam, shedding softness, and a kind of sacredness, over all that preceded : so in her too there was an Unnameable ; she too was a Daughter of the Infinite ; there were mysteries which Philosophism had not dreamt of !—She left long written counsels to her little Girl ; she said her Husband would not survive her.

*Thomas Carlyle*

### III

WHEN she whose glory casts in shade  
France and her best and bravest, was convey'd  
Thither where all worth praise had bled,  
An aged man in the same car was led  
To the same end. The only way,  
Roland ! to soothe his fear didst thou essay.  
“O Sir ! indeed you must not see  
The blood that is about to flow from me.  
Mount first these steps—a mother torn  
From her one child worse pangs each day hath borne.”  
He trembled . . . but obey'd the word . . .  
Then sprang she up and met the reeking sword.

*W. S. Landor*



## The Heroines

Charlotte Corday



### I

**A**MID which dim ferment of Caen and the World, History specially notices one thing : in the lobby of the Mansion *de l'Intendance*, where busy Deputies are coming and going, a young Lady with an aged valet, taking grave graceful leave of Deputy Barbaroux. She is of stately Norman figure ; in her twenty-fifth year ; of beautiful still countenance : her name is Charlotte Corday, heretofore styled D'Armans, while Nobility still was. Barbaroux has given her a Note to Deputy Duperret,—him who once drew his sword in the effervescence. Apparently she will to Paris on some errand ? “She was a Republican before the Revolution, and never wanted energy.” A completeness, a decision is in this fair female Figure : “by energy she means the spirit that will prompt one to sacrifice himself for his country.” What if she, this fair young Charlotte, had emerged from her secluded stillness, suddenly like a Star ; cruel-lovely, with half-angelic, half-dæmonic splendour ; to gleam for a moment, and in a moment be extinguished : to be held in memory, so bright complete was she, through long centuries !—Quitting Cimmerian Coalitions without, and the dim-simmering Twenty-five millions within, History will look fixedly at this one fair Apparition of a Charlotte Corday ; will note whither Charlotte moves, how the little Life burns forth so radiant, then vanishes swallowed of the Night.

With Barbaroux's Note of Introduction, and slight stock of luggage, we see Charlotte on Tuesday the 9th of July seated in the Caen Diligence, with a place for Paris. None takes farewell of her, wishes her Good-journey : her Father will find a line left, signifying that

## Her Infinite Variety

she is gone to England, that he must pardon her, and forget her. The drowsy Diligence lumbers along ; amid drowsy talk of Politics, and praise of the Mountain ; in which she mingles not : all night, all day, and again all night. On Thursday, not long before noon, we are at the bridge of Neuilly ; here is Paris with her thousand black domes, the goal and purpose of thy journey ! Arrived at the Inn de la Providence in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, Charlotte demands a room ; hastens to bed ; sleeps all afternoon and night, till the morrow morning.

On the morrow morning, she delivers her Note to Duperret. It relates to certain Family Papers which are in the Minister of the Interior's hands ; which a Nun at Caen, an old Convent-friend of Charlotte's, has need of ; which Duperret shall assist her in getting : this then was Charlotte's errand to Paris ? She has finished this, in the course of Friday ;—yet says nothing of returning. She has seen and silently investigated several things. The Convention, in bodily reality, she has seen ; what the Mountain is like. The living physiognomy of Marat she could not see ; he is sick at present, and confined to home.

About eight on the Saturday morning, she purchases a large sheath-knife in the Palais Royal ; then straightway, in the Place des Victoires, takes a hackney-coach : "To the Rue de l'École de Médecine, No. 44." It is the residence of the Citoyen Marat !—The Citoyen Marat is ill, and cannot be seen ; which seems to disappoint her much. Her business is with Marat, then ? Hapless beautiful Charlotte ; hapless squalid Marat ! From Caen in the utmost West, from Neuchâtel in the utmost East, they two are drawing nigh each other ; they two have, very strangely, business

## The Heroines

together.—Charlotte, returning to her Inn, despatches a short Note to Marat ; signifying that she is from Caen, the seat of rebellion ; that she desires earnestly to see him, and “will put it in his power to do France a great service.” No answer. Charlotte writes another Note, still more pressing ; sets out with it by coach, about seven in the evening, herself. Tired day-labourers have again finished their Week ; huge Paris is circling and simmering, manifold, according to its vague wont : this one fair Figure has decision in it ; drives straight,—towards a purpose.

It is yellow July evening, we say, the thirteenth of the month ; eve of the Bastille day,—when “M. Marat,” four years ago, in the crowd of the Pont Neuf, shrewdly required of that Besenval Hussar-party, which had such friendly dispositions, “to dismount, and give up their arms, then ;” and became notable among Patriot men. Four years : what a road he has travelled ;—and sits now, about half-past seven of the clock, stewing in slipper-bath ; sore afflicted ; ill of Revolution Fever,—of what other malady this History had rather not name. Excessively sick and worn, poor man : with precisely elevenpence-halfpenny of ready-money, in paper ; with slipper-bath ; strong three-footed stool for writing on, the while ; and a squalid—Washerwoman, one may call her : that is his civic establishment in Medical-School Street ; thither and not elsewhither has his road led him. Not to the reign of Brotherhood and Perfect Felicity ; yet surely on the way towards that ?—Hark, a rap again ! A musical woman’s voice, refusing to be rejected : it is the Citoyenne who would do France a service. Marat, recognising from within, cries, Admit her. Charlotte Corday is admitted.

Citoyen Marat, I am from Caen, the seat of rebellion,

## Her Infinite Variety

and wished to speak with you.—Be seated, *mon enfant*. Now what are the Traitors doing at Caen? What Deputies are at Caen?—Charlotte names some Deputies. “Their heads shall fall within a fortnight,” croaks the eager People’s-friend, clutching his tablets to write: *Barbaroux*, *Pétion*, writes he with bare shrunk arm, turning aside in the bath: *Pétion*, and *Louvet*, and—Charlotte has drawn her knife from the sheath; plunges it, with one sure stroke, into the writer’s heart. “*À moi, chère amie*, Help, dear!” no more could the Death-choked say or shriek. The helpful Washerwoman running in, there is no Friend of the People, or Friend of the Washerwoman left; but his life with a groan gushes out, indignant, to the shades below. . . .

As for Charlotte Corday, her work is accomplished; the recompense of it is near and sure. The *chère amie*, and neighbours of the house, flying at her, she “overturns some movables,” entrenches herself till the gendarmes arrive; then quietly surrenders; goes quietly to the Abbaye Prison: she alone quiet, all Paris sounding, in wonder, in rage or admiration, round her. Duperret is put in arrest, on account of her; his Papers sealed,—which may lead to consequences. Fauchet, in like manner; though Fauchet had not so much as heard of her. Charlotte, confronted with these two Deputies, praises the grave firmness of Duperret, censures the dejection of Fauchet.

On Wednesday morning, the thronged Palais de Justice and Revolutionary Tribunal can see her face; beautiful and calm: she dates it “fourth day of the Preparation of Peace.” A strange murmur ran through the Hall, at sight of her; you could not say of what character. Tinville has his indictments and tape-papers: the cutler of the Palais Royal will testify that he sold

## The Heroines

her the sheath-knife ; " All these details are needless," interrupted Charlotte ; " it is I that killed Marat." By whose instigation ?—" By no one's." What tempted you, then ? His crimes. " I killed one man," added she, raising her voice extremely (*extrêmement*), as they went on with their questions, " I killed one man to save a hundred thousand ; a villain to save innocents ; a savage wild-beast to give repose to my country. I was a Republican before the Revolution ; I never wanted energy." There is therefore nothing to be said. The public gazes astonished : the hasty limners sketch her features, Charlotte not disapproving : the men of law proceed with their formalities. The doom is Death as a murderess. To her Advocate she gives thanks ; in gentle phrase, in high-flown classical spirit. To the Priest they send her she gives thanks ; but needs not any shriving, any ghostly or other aid from him.

On this same evening, therefore, about half-past seven o'clock, from the gate of the Conciergerie, to a City all on tiptoe, the fatal Cart issues ; seated on it a fair young creature, sheeted in red smock of Murderess ; so beautiful, serene, so full of life ; journeying towards death,—alone amid the World. Many take off their hats, saluting reverently ; for what heart but must be touched ? Others growl and howl. Adam Lux, of Mentz, declares that she is greater than Brutus ; that it were beautiful to die with her : the head of this young man seems turned. At the Place de la Révolution, the countenance of Charlotte wears the same still smile. The executioners proceed to bind her feet ; she resists, thinking it meant as an insult ; on a word of explanation, she submits with cheerful apology. As the last act, all being now ready, they take the neckerchief from her neck ; a blush of maidenly shame overspreads that fair

## Her Infinite Variety

face and neck ; the cheeks were still tinged with it when the executioner lifted the severed head, to show it to the people. "It is most true," says Forster, "that he struck the cheek insultingly ; for I saw it with my eyes : the Police imprisoned him for it."

*Thomas Carlyle*

### II

**H**EARTS must not sink at seeing Law lie dead ;  
No, Corday, no ;  
Else Justice had not crown'd in heaven thy head  
Profaned below.

Three women France hath borne, each greater far  
Than all her men.  
And greater many were than any are  
At sword or pen—

Corneille, the first among Gaul's rhymer race  
Whose soul was free,  
Descends from his high station, proud to trace  
His line in thee.

*W. S. Landor*

Florence Nightingale    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

### I

**W**HENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,  
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,  
Our hearts in glad surprise  
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls  
Into our inmost being rolls,  
And lifts us unawares  
Out of all meaner cares.

## The Heroines

Honour to those whose words or deeds  
Thus help us in our daily needs,  
And by their overflow  
Raise us from what is low !

Thus thought I, as by night I read  
Of the great army of the dead,  
The trenches cold and damp,  
The starved and frozen camp—

The wounded from the battle plain,  
In dreary hospitals of pain,  
The cheerless corridors,  
The cold and stony floors.

Lo ! in that house of misery  
A lady with a lamp I see  
Pass through the glimmering gloom,  
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,  
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss  
Her shadow, as it falls  
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be  
Opened, and then closed suddenly,  
The vision came and went :  
The light shone, and was spent.

On England's annals through the long  
Hereafter of her speech and song,  
That light its rays shall cast  
From portals of the past.

## Her Infinite Variety

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good,  
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here  
The palm, the lily, and the spear,  
The symbols that of yore  
Saint Filomena bore.

*H. W. Longfellow*

### II

"SHE was a grand lady to us soldiers, a regular mother, so kind, so gentle, and we often wondered if she ever went to sleep, because she was always at work among the sick, day and night."

*Robert Holden (a Crimean veteran)*






## X

### SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN

women's eyes this doctrine I derive :  
 sparkle still the right Promethean fire ;  
 re the books, the arts, the academics,  
 ow, contain, and nourish all the world :  
 e at all in aught proves excellent.

*Love's Labour's Lost*

Shakespeare's Women     

NOTE broadly in the outset Shakespeare has no  
 heroes ;—he has only heroines. There is not one  
 entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight  
 sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes  
 of the stage ; and the still slighter Valentine in *The  
 Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In his laboured and perfect  
 plays you have no hero. Othello would have been one,  
 if his simplicity had not been so great as to leave him  
 the prey of every base practice round him ; but he is  
 the only example even approximating to the heroic type.  
 Coriolanus—Cæsar—Antony, stand in flawed strength,  
 and fall by their vanities ;—Hamlet is indolent, and  
 drowsily speculative ; Romeo an impatient boy ; the  
 Merchant of Venice languidly submissive to adverse  
 fortune ; Kent, in *King Lear*, is entirely noble at heart,  
 but too rough and unpolished to be of true use at the

## Her Infinite Variety

critical time, and he sinks into the office of a servant only. Orlando, no less neglected, is yet the dearest of chance, followed, comforted, saved, by his friends. Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a woman in it, steadfast in grave hope and purpose : Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Imogen, Queen Katherine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Helina, and last, and perhaps loveliest of all, are all faultless ; conceived in the highest of humanity.

Then observe, secondly,

The catastrophe of every play is caused wholly or fault of a man ; the redemption, if there is any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and if there is none. The catastrophe of King Lear is owing to his own want of judgment, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children ; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him ; as it is, she all but saves him.

Of Othello I need not trace the tale ;—nor the one weakness of his so mighty love ; nor the inferiority of his perceptive intellect to that even of the second woman character in the play, the Emilia who dies in wild testimony against his error :—“ Oh, murderous coxcomb ! What should such a fool Do with so good a wife ? ”

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the wise and entirely brave stratagem of the wife is brought to ruinous issue by the reckless impatience of her husband. In *Winter's Tale*, and in *Cymbeline*, the happiness and existence of two princely households, lost through long years, and imperilled to the death by the folly and obstinacy of the husbands, are redeemed at last by the queenly patience and wisdom of the wives. In *Measure for Measure*, the injustice of

## Shakespeare's Women

the judges, and the corrupt cowardice of the brother, are opposed to the victorious truth and adamant purity of a woman. In *Coriolanus*, the mother's counsel, acted upon in time, would have saved her son from all evil ; his momentary forgetfulness of it is his ruin ; her prayer, at last granted, saves him—not, indeed, from death, but from the curse of living as the destroyer of his country.

And what shall I say of Julia, constant against the fickleness of a lover who is a mere wicked child?—of Helena, against the petulance and insult of a careless youth?—of the patience of Hero, the passion of Beatrice, and the calmly devoted wisdom of the “unlessoned girl,” who appears among the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, to save merely by her presence, and defeat the worst intensities of crime by her smile?

Observe, further, among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays, there is only one weak woman—Ophelia ; and it is because she fails Hamlet at the critical moment, and is not, and cannot in her nature be, a guide to him when he needs her most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. Finally, though there are three wicked women among the principal figures, Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril, they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life : fatal in their influence also in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Such, in broad light, is Shakespeare's testimony to the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors,—incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.

*John Ruskin*

## Her Infinite Variety

Perdita ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

### I

**T**HIS is the prettiest low-born lass that ever  
Ran on the green-sward : nothing she does or seems  
But smacks of something greater than herself ;  
Too noble for this place.

*Camillo.* He tells her something  
That makes her blood look out. Good sooth, she is  
The queen of curds and cream.

### II

*Gentleman.* This is a creature,  
Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal  
Of all professors else, make proselytes  
Of whom she but bid follow.

*Paulina.* How ! not women ?

*Gentleman.* Women will love her, that she is a woman  
More worth than any man ; men, that she is  
The rarest of all women.

Juliet and her Nurse ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

**L**ADY CAPULET. Nurse, where's my daughter ?  
call her forth to me.

*Nurse.* Now, by my maidenhead, at twelve year old,—  
I bade her come. What, lamb ! what, lady-bird !  
God forbid ! where's this girl ? what, Juliet !

*Enter JULIET*

*Juliet.* How now ! who calls ?

*Nurse.* Your mother.

## Shakespeare's Women

*Juliet.*

Madam, I am here.

What is your will?

*Lady Cap.* This is the matter. Nurse, give leave awhile.

We must talk in secret : nurse, come back again ;  
I have remember'd me, thou's hear our counsel.

Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

*Nurse.* Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

*Lady Cap.* She's not fourteen.

*Nurse.*

I'll lay fourteen of my teeth—

And yet to my teen be it spoken I have but four—

She is not fourteen. How long is it now

To Lammas-tide ?

*Lady Cap.* A fortnight and odd days.

*Nurse.* Even or odd, of all days in the year,  
Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen.

Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls !—

Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God ;

She was too good for me. But, as I said,

On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen ;

That shall she, marry ; I remember it well.

'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years ;

And she was wean'd, I never shall forget it,

Of all the days of the year, upon that day ;

For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,

Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall ;

My lord and you were then at Mantua.

Nay, I do bear a brain :—but, as I said,

When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple

Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool !

To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug.

“Shake,” quoth the dove-house : 'twas no need, I  
trow,

To bid me trudge :

## Her Infinite Variety

And since that time it is eleven years ;  
For then she could stand high lone ; nay, by the  
rood,  
She could have run and waddled all about ;  
For even the day before she broke her brow :  
And then my husband—God be with his soul !  
A' was a merry man—took up the child :  
“ Yea,” quoth he, “ dost thou fall upon thy face ?  
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit ;  
Wilt thou not, Jule ? ” and, by my halidom,  
The pretty wretch left crying, and said “ Ay.”  
To see now how a jest shall come about !  
I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,  
I never should forget it : “ Wilt thou not, Jule ? ” quoth  
he ;

And, pretty fool, it stinted and said “ Ay.”

*Lady Cap.* Enough of this ; I pray thee, hold thy  
peace.

*Nurse.* Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but  
laugh,

To think it should leave crying, and say “ Ay.”  
And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow  
A bump as big as a young cockerel's stone ;  
A parlous knock ; and it cried bitterly :  
“ Yea,” quoth my husband, “ fall'st upon thy face ?  
Thou wilt fall backward when thou com'st to age ;  
Wilt thou not, Jule ? ” it stinted and said “ Ay.”

*Jul.* And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

*Nurse.* Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his  
grace !

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed :  
An I might live to see thee married once,  
I have my wish.

## Shakespeare's Women

Juliet's Nurse    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

IN old-world nursery vacant now of children,  
With posied walls, familiar, fair, demure,  
And facing southward o'er romantic streets,  
Sits yet and gossips winter's dark away  
One gloomy, vast, glossy, and wise, and sly :  
And at her side a cherried country cousin—  
Her tongue claps ever like a ram's sweet bell ;  
There's not a name but calls a tale to mind—  
Some marrowy patty of farce or melodram ;  
There's not a soldier but hath babes in view ;  
There's not on earth what minds not of the midwife :  
“ O, widowhood that left me still espoused ! ”  
Beauty she sighs o'er, and she sighs o'er gold ;  
Gold will buy all things, even a sweet husband,  
Else only Heav'n is left and—farewell youth !  
Yet, strangely, in that money-haunted head,  
The sad, gemm'd crucifix and incense blue  
Is childhood come again. Her memory  
Is like an ant-hill which a twig disturbs,  
But twig stilled never. And to see her face,  
Broad with sleek homely beams ; her babied hands,  
Even like 'lighting doves, and her small eyes—  
Blue wells a-twinkle, arch and lewd and pious—  
To dark'n all sudden into Stygian gloom,  
And pant disaster with uplifted whites,  
Is life's epitome. She prates and prates—  
A waterbrook of words o'er twelve small pebbles.  
And when she dies—some grey, long, summer evening,  
When the bird shouts of childhood thro' the dusk,  
'Neath night's faint tapers,—then her body shall  
Lie stiff with silks of sixty thrifty years.

*Walter De la Mare*

## Her Infinite Variety

Marina    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

*F*IRST LORD. Sir,

We have a maid in Mitylene, I durst wager,  
Would win some words of him.

*Lysimachus.*

'Tis well bethought.

She questionless with her sweet harmony  
And other chosen attractions, would allure,  
And make a battery through his deafen'd ports  
Which now are midway stopp'd :  
She is all happy as the fair'st of all,  
And with her fellow maids is now upon  
The leafy shelter that abuts against  
The island's side.

Sylvia    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

*V*ALENTINE. And why not death rather than  
living torment ?

To die is to be banish'd from myself ;  
And Sylvia is myself : banish'd from her  
Is self from self,—a deadly banishment !  
What light is light, if Sylvia be not seen ?  
What joy is joy, if Sylvia be not by ?  
Unless it be to think that she is by  
And feed upon the shadow of perfection.  
Except I be by Sylvia in the night,  
There is no music in the nightingale ;  
Unless I look on Sylvia in the day,  
There is no day for me to look upon.  
She is my essence.



## Shakespeare's Women

Lady Percy    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**L**ADY PERCY. But hear you, my lord.

*Hotspur.* What sayst thou, my lady?

*Lady P.* What is it carries you away?

*Hot.* Why, my horse, my love, my horse.

*Lady P.* Out, you mad-headed ape !

A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen

As you are toss'd with. In faith,

I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.

I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir

About his title, and hath sent for you

To line his enterprise. But if you go—

*Hot.* So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.

*Lady P.* Come, come, you paraquito, answer me  
Directly unto this question that I ask.

In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,

An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

*Hot.* Away,

Away, you trifler ! Love ! I love thee not,

I care not for thee, Kate : this is no world

To play with mammets and to tilt with lips :

We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,

And pass them current too. God's me, my horse !

What sayst thou, Kate ? what wouldst thou have with  
me ?

*Lady P.* Do you not love me ? do you not, indeed ?

Well, do not, then ; for since you love me not,

I will not love myself. Do you not love me ?

Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.

*Hot.* Come, wilt thou see me ride ?

And when I am o' horseback, I will swear

I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate ;

I must not have you henceforth question me

## Her Infinite Variety

Whither I go, nor reason whereabouts.  
Whither I must, I must ; and, to conclude,  
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.  
I know you wise ; but yet no further wise  
Than Harry Percy's wife : constant you are,  
But yet a woman : and for secrecy,  
No lady closer : for I well believe  
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know ;  
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

*Lady P.* How ! so far ?

*Hot.* Not an inch further. But, hark you, Kate ;  
Whither I go, thither shall you go too ;  
To-day will I set forth, to-morrow you.  
Will this content you, Kate ?

*Lady P.*

It must, of force.

The Lady Blanch



THAT daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,  
Is near to England : look upon the years  
Of Lewis the Dauphin and that lovely maid.  
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,  
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch ?  
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,  
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch ?  
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,  
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch ?  
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,  
Is the young Dauphin every way complete :  
If not complete of, say he is not she ;  
And she again wants nothing, to name want,  
If want it be not that she is not he :  
He is the half part of a blessed man,  
Left to be finished by such a she ;

## Shakespeare's Women

And she a fair divided excellence,  
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.  
O ! two such silver currents, when they join,  
Do glorify the banks that bound them in.

Desdemona    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

*B*RABANTIO.                      A maiden never bold ;  
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
Blush'd at herself ; and she, in spite of nature,  
Of years, of country, credit, everything,  
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on ! . . .

*First Senator.* But, Othello, speak :  
Did you by indirect and forced courses  
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections ;  
Or came it by request and such fair question  
As soul to soul affordeth ?

*Othello.*                              I do beseech you,  
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,  
And let her speak of me before her father : . . .  
And, till she come, as truly as to heaven  
I do confess the vices of my blood,  
So justly to your grave ears I'll present  
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,  
And she in mine.

*Duke.* Say it, Othello.

*Oth.* Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;  
Still question'd me the story of my life  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes  
That I have pass'd.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it ;  
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,

## Her Infinite Variety

Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
And portance in my travel's history ;  
Wherein of antres vast and desarts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch  
    heaven,  
It was my hint to speak, such was the process ;  
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline ;  
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence ;  
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse. Which I observing,  
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means  
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
But not intentively : I did consent ;  
And often did beguile her of her tears,  
When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :  
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange ;  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful :  
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man ; she thank'd me,  
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake :  
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I lov'd her that she did pity them.

## Shakespeare's Women





This only is the witchcraft I have us'd :  
Here comes the lady ; let her witness it.

*Enter DESDEMONA*

*Bra.* I pray you, hear her speak :  
If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame  
Light on the man ! Come hither, gentle mistress :  
Do you perceive in all this noble company  
Where most you owe obedience ?

*Des.* My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty :  
To you I am bound for life and education ;  
My life and education both to learn me  
How to respect you ; you are the lord of duty,  
I am hitherto your daughter : but here's my husband ;  
And so much duty as my mother show'd  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor my lord.

*Bra.* God be with you ! I have done.

Cleopatra                                    

*M*ECÆNAS. She's a most triumphant lady, if  
report be square to her.

*Enobarbus.* When she first met Mark Antony she  
purs'd up his heart, upon the river of Cydnus.

*Agrippa.* There she appeared indeed, or my reporter  
devised well for her.

*Eno.* I will tell you.  
The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
Burn'd on the water ; the poop was beaten gold,

## Her Infinite Variety

Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
The winds were love-sick with them, the oars were silver,  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
It beggar'd all description ; she did lie  
In her pavilion,—cloth-of-gold of tissue,—  
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see  
The fancy outwork nature ; on each side her  
Stood pretty-dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem  
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
And what they undid did.

*Agr.* O ! rare for Antony.

*Eno.* Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,  
And made their bends adornings ; at the helm  
A seeming mermaid steers ; the silken tackle  
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,  
That yarely frame the office. From the barge  
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense  
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast  
Her people out upon her, and Antony,  
Enthron'd i' the market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to the air ; which, but for vacancy,  
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too  
And made a gap in nature.

*Agr.* Rare Egyptian !

*Eno.* Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,  
Invited her to supper ; she replied  
It should be better he became her guest,  
Which she entreated. Our courteous Antony,  
Whom ne'er the word of " No " woman heard speak,  
Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,

—

And, for his ordinary pays his heart  
For what his eyes eat only.

*Agr.* Royal wench !

She made great Cæsar lay his sword to bed ;  
He plough'd her, and she cropp'd.

*Eno.* I saw her once

Hop forty paces through the public street ;  
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted  
That she did make defect perfection,  
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

*Mec.* Now Antony must leave her utterly.

*Eno.* Never ; he will not :

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety.

~~~~~

I

*KENT.* Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

*Gentleman.* Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down  
Her delicate cheek ; it seem'd she was a queen  
Over her passion ; who, most rebel-like,  
Sought to be king o'er her.

*Kent.* O ! then it mov'd her.

*Gent.* Not to a rage ; patience and sorrow strove  
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
Sunshine and rain at once ; her smiles and tears  
Were like a better way ; those happy smilets  
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know

## Her Infinite Variety

What guests were in her eyes ; which parted thence,  
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,  
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,  
If all could so become it.

*Kent.*

Made she no verbal question ?

*Gent.* Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of  
" father "

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart ;  
Cried, " Sisters ! sisters ! Shame of ladies ! sisters !  
Kent ! father ! sisters ! What, i' the storm ? i' the night ?  
Let pity not be believed ! " There she shook  
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,  
And clamour-moisten'd, then away she started  
To deal with grief alone.

## II

*Enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms ;  
EDGAR, Officer, and Others.*

*Lear.* Howl, howl, howl, howl ! O ! you are men of  
stones :

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vaults should crack. She's gone for ever.  
I know when one is dead, and when one lives ;  
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass ;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.

*Kent.*

Is this the promis'd end ?

*Edg.* Or image of that horror ?

*Albany.*

Fall and cease ?

*Lear.* This feather stirs ; she lives ! if it be so,  
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows  
That ever I have felt.

*Kent (kneeling).* O, my good master !



## Shakespeare's Women

*Lear.* Prithee, away.

*Edg.* 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

*Lear.* A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all !

I might have sav'd her ; now, she's gone for ever !

Cordelia, Cordelia ! stay a little. Ha !

What is't thou sayst ? Her voice was ever soft,

Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.

I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee.

*Off.* 'Tis true, my lord, he did.

*Lear.* Did I not, fellow ?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion

I would have made them skip : I am old now,

And these same crosses spoil me.

Viola    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

*VIOLA.* Ay, but I know,—  
*Duke.* What dost thou know ?

*Vio.* Too well what love women to men may owe :

In faith, they are as true of heart as we.

My father had a daughter lov'd a man,

As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,

I should your lordship.

*Duke.* And what's her history ?

*Vio.* A blank, my lord. She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,

Feed on her damask cheek : she pin'd in thought,

And with a green and yellow melancholy,

She sat like Patience on a monument,

Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed ?

We men may say more, swear more ; but indeed

Our shows are more than will, for still we prove

Much in our vows, but little in our love.

## Her Infinite Variety

Bianca    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**L**UCENTIO. Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

Shakespeare's Women    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**Y**ES, truth is the token of Shakespearian love, no matter what the form may be in which it appears, be it Miranda, or Juliet, or Cleopatra.

While I mention these names rather by accident than with intention, it occurs to me that they really represent the three most deeply significant types of love. Miranda is the representative of a love which, without previous influences of any kind, could only develop its highest ideality as the flower of an untrodden soil which only the feet of spirits had trodden.

Ariel's melodies have trained her heart, and sensuality has never been known to her, save in the horribly hideous form of a Caliban. The love which Ferdinand awakes in her is therefore not really naïve but of a happy true-heartedness, of an early-world-like, almost terrible purity. Juliet's love shows like her age and all around her, a more romantic mediæval character, and one blooming into the Renaissance; it glitters in colours like the court of the Scaligeri, and yet is strong as of those noble races of Lombardy which were rejuvenated with German blood and loved as strongly as they hated.

Juliet represents the love of a youthful, rather rough, but of an unspoiled and fresh era. She is entirely inspired with the sensuous glow and strength of belief of such a time, and even the cold decay of the burial vault can neither shake her faith nor cool her flame.

Our Cleopatra!—ah, she sets forth the love of a sickly

## Shakespeare's Women

civilisation—an eye whose beauty is faded, whose locks are curled with the utmost art, anointed with all pleasant perfumes, but in which many a grey hair may be seen, a time which will empty the cup held out to it all the more hastily because it is full of dregs. This love is without faith or truth, but for all that none the less wild or glowing. In the vexed consciousness that this heart is not to be subdued, the impatient woman pours still more oil into it, and casts herself like a Bacchante into the blazing flame. She is cowardly, and yet inspired with desire for her own destruction. Love is always a kind of madness, more or less beautiful, but in this Egyptian queen it rises to the most horrible lunacy. Such love is a raging comet, which with its flaming train darts into unheard-of orbits through heaven, terrifies all even if it does not injure them, and at last, miserably crackling together, is scattered like a rocket into a thousand pieces.






Yes, thou wert like a terrible comet, beautiful Cleopatra, and thou didst glow not only into thine own ruin, but wert ominous of evil for those of thy time! With Antony the old heroic Roman spirit came to a wretched end.

But wherewith shall I compare you, O Juliet and Miranda? I look again to heaven, seeking for a simile. It may be behind the stars where my glance cannot pierce. Perhaps if the glowing sun had the mildness of the moon I could compare it to thee, O Juliet! And were the gentle moon gifted with the glow of the sun, I would say it was like thee, Miranda!

*Heinrich Heine*

## XI

### SIR WALTER'S LADIES

Sir Walter's Ladies                    

**I**N the whole range of these [the Waverley novels] there are but three men who reach the heroic type—Dandie Dinmont, Rob Roy, and Claverhouse : of these, one is a border farmer ; another a freebooter ; the third a soldier in a bad cause. And these touch the ideal of heroism only in their courage and faith, together with a strong, but uncultivated, or mistakenly applied, intellectual power ; while his younger men are the gentlemanly play-things of fantastic fortune, and only by aid (or accident) of that fortune, survive, not vanquish, the trials they involuntarily sustain. Of any disciplined, or consistent character, earnest in a purpose wisely conceived, or dealing with forms of hostile evil, definitely challenged, and resolutely subdued, there is no trace in his conceptions of men. Whereas in his imaginations of women,—in the characters of Ellen Douglas, of Flora MacIvor, Rose Bradwardine, Catherine Seyton, Diana Vernon, Lillias Redgauntlet, Alice Bridgenorth, Alice Lee, and Jeanie Deans,—with endless varieties of grace, tenderness, and intellectual power, we find in all a quite infallible and inevitable sense of dignity and justice ; a fearless, instant, and untiring self-sacrifice to even the

## Sir Walter's Ladies

appearance of duty, much more to its real claims ; and, finally, a patient wisdom of deeply restrained affection, which does infinitely more than protect its objects from a momentary error ; it gradually forms, animates, and exalts the characters of the unworthy lovers, until, at the close of the tale, we are just able, and no more, to take patience in hearing of their unmerited success.

So that in all cases, with Scott as with Shakespeare, it is the woman who watches over, teaches, and guides the youth ; it is never, by any chance, the youth who watches over or educates his mistress.

*John Ruskin*

Rebecca      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪      ∪

THE figure of Rebecca might indeed have compared with the proudest beauties of England, even though it had been judged by as shrewd a connoisseur as Prince John. Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a lovely neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible—all these constituted a combination of loveliness, which yielded not to the most beautiful of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps, which closed her vest from the throat to the

## Her Infinite Variety

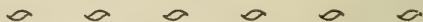
waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an agraffe set with brilliants, was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess, scoffed and sneered at by the proud dames who sat above her, but secretly envied by those who affected to deride them.

"By the bald scalp of Abraham," said Prince John, "yonder Jewess must be the very model of that perfection, whose charms drove frantic the wisest king that ever lived! What sayest thou, Prior Aymer?—By the Temple of that wise king, which our wiser brother Richard proved unable to recover, she is the very Bride of the Canticles!"

"The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley," answered the Prior, in a sort of snuffling tone; "but your Grace must remember she is still but a Jewess."

*(From "Ivanhoe")*

Di Vernon



IT was a young lady, the loveliness of whose very striking features was enhanced by the animation of the chase and the glow of the exercise, mounted on a beautiful horse, jet black, unless where he was flecked by spots of the snow-white foam which embossed his bridle. She wore, what was then somewhat unusual, a coat, vest, and hat, resembling those of a man, which fashion has since called a riding habit. The mode had been introduced while I was in France, and was perfectly new to me. Her long black hair streamed on the breeze, having in the hurry of the chase escaped from the ribbon

## Sir Walter's Ladies

which bound it. Some very broken ground, through which she guided her horse with the most admirable address and presence of mind, retarded her course, and brought her closer to me than any of the other riders had passed. I had, therefore, a full view of her uncommonly fine face and person, to which an inexpressible charm was added by the wild gaiety of the scene, and the romance of her singular dress and unexpected appearance. . . .

"But here we are in the court of the old Hall, which looks as wild and old-fashioned as any of its inmates. There is no great toilette kept at Osbaldistone Hall, you must know ; but I must take off these things, they are so unpleasantly warm,—and the hat hurts my forehead, too," continued the lively girl, taking it off, and shaking down a profusion of sable ringlets, which, half laughing, half blushing, she separated with her white slender fingers, in order to clear them away from her beautiful face and piercing hazel eyes. If there was any coquetry in the action, it was well disguised by the careless indifference of her manner.

(*From "Rob Roy"*)

Catherine Seton



ROLAND had time to observe that the face was that of a girl apparently not much past sixteen, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favourable observations was added the certainty that the fair object to whom they referred possessed an excellent shape, bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a sylph, but beautifully formed, and shown to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat, which she wore after a foreign fashion, the last not quite long enough to conceal a



## Her Infinite Variety

very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sat ; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert sempstress. . . .

Catherine was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit, when, after the first moment of embarrassment was over, a situation of awkwardness, like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth not even known to her by name, struck her, in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sat out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony ; but then, glancing her deep blue eye a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he laboured,—now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation,—she could keep her composure no longer, but after a vain struggle broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment.

*(From "The Abbot")*

Rose Bradwardine      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

MISS BRADWARDINE was but seventeen ; yet, at the last races of the county town of —, upon her health being proposed among a round of beauties, the Laird of Bumperquaigh, permanent toast-



## Sir Walter's Ladies

master and croupier of the Bautherwhillery Club, not only said *More* to the pledge in a pint bumper of Bourdeaux; but, ere pouring forth the libation, denominated the divinity to whom it was dedicated, "the Rose of Tully-Veolan"; upon which festive occasion, three cheers were given by all the sitting members of that respectable society, whose throats the wine had left capable of such exertion. Nay, I am well assured, that the sleeping partners of the company snorted applause, and that although strong bumpers and weak brains had consigned two or three to the floor, yet even these, fallen as they were from their high estate, and weltering—I will carry the parody no farther—uttered divers inarticulate sounds, intimating their assent to the motion.

Such unanimous applause could not be extorted but by acknowledged merit; and Rose Bradwardine not only deserved it, but also the approbation of much more rational persons than the Bautherwhillery Club could have mustered, even before discussion of the first *magnum*. She was indeed a very pretty girl of the Scotch cast of beauty, that is, with a profusion of hair of paley gold, and a skin like the snow of her own mountains in whiteness. Yet she had not a pallid or pensive cast of countenance; her features, as well as her temper, had a lively expression; her complexion, though not florid, was so pure as to seem transparent, and the slightest emotion sent her whole blood at once to her face and neck. Her form, though under the common size, was remarkably elegant, and her motions light, easy, and unembarrassed. She came from another part of the garden to receive Captain Waverley, with a manner that hovered between bashfulness and courtesy.

(From "*Waverley*")

## Her Infinite Variety

Mistress Bethune Baliol (Mrs. Murray Keith)



MISTRESS MARTHA BETHUNE BALIOL was a person of quality and fortune, as these are esteemed in Scotland. Her family was ancient and her connections honourable. She was not fond of specially indicating her exact age, but her juvenile recollections stretched backwards till before the eventful year 1745 ; and she remembered the Highland clans being in possession of the Scottish capital, though probably only as an indistinct vision. Her fortune, independent by her father's bequest, was rendered opulent by the death of more than one brave brother, who fell successively in the service of their country ; so that the family estates became vested in the only surviving child of the ancient house of Bethune Baliol. My intimacy was formed with the excellent lady after this event, and when she was already something advanced in age.

She inhabited, when in Edinburgh, where she regularly spent the winter season, one of those old hotels which till of late were to be found in the neighbourhood of the Canongate and of the Palace of Holyrood House, and which, separated from the street, now dirty and vulgar, by paved courts and gardens of some extent, made amends for an indifferent access by showing something of aristocratic state and seclusion, when you were once admitted within their precincts. . . .

You entered by a matted anteroom into the eating parlour, filled with old-fashioned furniture and hung with family portraits, which, excepting one of Sir Bernard Bethune in James the Sixth's time, said to be by Jameson, were exceedingly frightful. A saloon, as it was called, a long narrow chamber, led out of the dining parlour and served for a drawing-room. It was a

## Sir Walter's Ladies

pleasant apartment, looking out upon the south flank of Holyrood House, the gigantic slope of Arthur's Seat, and the girdle of lofty rocks called Salisbury Crags—objects so rudely wild that the mind can hardly conceive them to exist in the vicinage of a populous metropolis. The paintings of the saloon came from abroad, and had some of them much merit. To see the best of them, however, you must be admitted into the very penetralia of the temple, and allowed to draw the tapestry at the upper end of the saloon, and enter Mistress Martha's own special dressing-room. This was a charming apartment, of which it would be difficult to describe the form, it had so many recesses, which were filled up with shelves of ebony, and cabinets of japan and *or molu*; some for holding books, of which Mistress Martha had an admirable collection, some for a display of ornamental china, others for shells and similar curiosities. . . .

There were some Italian and Flemish pictures of admitted authenticity, a few genuine bronzes and other objects of curiosity, which her brothers or herself had picked up while abroad. In short, it was a place where the idle were tempted to become studious, the studious to grow idle—where the grave might find matter to make them gay, and the gay subjects for gravity. . . .

In the little boudoir we have described Mistress Martha Baliol had her choicest meetings. She kept early hours; and if you went in the morning, you must not reckon that space of day as extending beyond three o'clock or four at the utmost. These vigilant habits were attended with some restraint on her visitors, but they were indemnified by your always finding the best society and the best information which was to be had for the day in the Scottish capital. Without at all affecting the blue-stockings, she liked books, they amused

## Her Infinite Variety

her—and if the authors were persons of character, she thought she owed them a debt of civility, which she loved to discharge by personal kindness. When she gave a dinner to a small party, which she did now and then, she had the good-nature to look for, and the good luck to discover, what sort of people suited each other best, and chose her company as Duke Theseus did his hounds,—

—— matched in mouth like bells,  
Each under each,

so that every guest could take his part in the cry, instead of one mighty Tom of a fellow, like Doctor Johnson, silencing all besides by the tremendous depth of his diapason. On such occasions she afforded *chère exquisite*; and every now and then there was some dish of French, or even Scottish derivation, which, as well as the numerous assortment of *vins extraordinaires* produced by Mr. Beauffet, gave a sort of antique and foreign air to the entertainment, which rendered it more interesting. . . .

A little woman, with ordinary features, and an ordinary form, and hair which in youth had no decided colour, we may believe Mistress Martha, when she said of herself that she was never remarkable for personal charms; a modest admission, which was readily confirmed by certain old ladies, her contemporaries, who, whatever might have been the useful advantages which they more than hinted had been formerly their own share, were now in personal appearance, as well as in everything else, far inferior to my accomplished friend. Mistress Martha's features had been of a kind which might be said to wear well; their irregularity was now of little consequence, animated as they were by the vivacity of her conversation; her teeth were excellent, and her eyes,

## Sir Walter's Ladies

although inclining to grey, were lively, laughing, and undimmed by time. A slight shade of complexion, more brilliant than her years promised, subjected my friend, amongst strangers, to the suspicion of having stretched her foreign habits as far as the prudent touch of the rouge. But it was a calumny; for when telling or listening to an interesting and affecting story, I have seen her colour come and go as if it played on the cheek of eighteen.

Her hair, whatever its former deficiencies, was now the most beautiful white that time could bleach, and was disposed with some degree of pretension, though in the simplest manner possible, so as to appear neatly smoothed under a cap of Flanders lace, of an old-fashioned, but, as I thought, of a very handsome form, which undoubtedly has a name, and I would endeavour to recur to it, if I thought it would make my description a bit more intelligible. I think I have heard her say these favourite caps had been her mother's, and had come in fashion with a peculiar kind of wig used by the gentlemen about the time of the battle of Ramillies. The rest of her dress was always rather costly and distinguished, especially in the evening. A silk or satin gown, of some colour becoming her age, and of a form which, though complying to a certain degree with the present fashion, had always a reference to some more distant period, was garnished with triple ruffles; her shoes had diamond buckles, and were raised a little at heel, an advantage which, possessed in her youth, she alleged her size would not permit her to forego in her old age. She always wore rings, bracelets, and other ornaments of value, either for the materials or the workmanship; nay, perhaps she was a little profuse in this species of display. But she wore them as sub-

## Her Infinite Variety

ordinate matters, to which the habit of being constantly in high life rendered her indifferent. She wore them because her rank required it; and thought no more of them as articles of finery than a gentleman dressed for dinner thinks of his clean linen and well-brushed coat, the consciousness of which embarrasses the rustic beau on a Sunday.

Now and then, however, if a gem or ornament chanced to be noticed for its beauty or singularity, the observation usually led the way to an entertaining account of the manner in which it had been acquired, or the person from whom it had descended to its present possessor. On such and similar occasions my old friend spoke willingly, which is not uncommon; but she also, which is more rare, spoke remarkably well, and had in her little narratives concerning foreign parts or former days, which formed an interesting part of her conversation, the singular art of dismissing all the usual protracted tautology respecting time, place, and circumstances, which is apt to settle like a mist upon the cold and languid tales of age, and at the same time of bringing forward, dwelling upon, and illustrating those incidents and characters which give point and interest to the story.

*(From "Chronicles of the Canongate")*

Varia    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

A MAN must be a man, and a woman a woman.

*Sancho Panza*

THE good woman doth not say, "Will you have this?" but gives it you.

*Italian Proverb*

TAKE your wife's first advice, not her second.

*Spanish Proverb*



## Sir Walter's Ladies

ALL women, let them be never so homely, are pleased to hear themselves celebrated for beauty.

*Dorothea in "Don Quixote"*

THOUGH there is little in a woman's advice, yet he that won't take it is not over-wise.

*Sancho Panza*

FOR we males, be we angelic as we may, are always surpassed by the ladies.

*Cowper*

"SIR, a very wise woman is a very foolish thing."

*William, Duke of Newcastle*

THE happiest women, like the happiest nations, have no history.

*George Eliot*

WOMAN is manne's joy and manne's bliss.

*Chaucer*

TALK to women as much as you can. This is the best school. This is the way to gain fluency, because you need not care what you say, and had better not be sensible.

*Baron Fleming in "Contarini Fleming"*

ALL the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone.

*Anne Elliot in "Persuasion"*

A GOOD wife is the workmanship of a good husband.

*Spanish Proverb*

THAT'S what a man wants in a wife, mostly ; he wants to make sure o' one fool as 'ull tell him he's wise.

*Mrs. Poyser*

## XII

### A SPECIAL TRIO

Beatrix    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

#### I

THIS laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House: in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers; and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height; and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty, that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible: and that night the great Duke was at the playhouse after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty: that is, her eyes, hair, and



## A Special Trio

eyebrows and eyelashes were dark : her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders ; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine ; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic—there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful.

### II

WHAT is the meaning of fidelity in love, and whence the birth of it? 'Tis a state of mind that men fall into, and depending on the man rather than the woman. We love being in love, that's the truth on't. If we had not met Joan, we should have met Kate, and adored her. We know our mistresses are no better than many other women, nor no prettier, nor no wiser, nor no wittier. 'Tis not for these reasons we love a woman, or for any special quality or charm I know of ; we might as well demand that a lady should be the tallest woman in the world, like the Shropshire giantess, as that she should be a paragon in any other character, before we began to love her. Esmond's mistress had a thousand faults beside her charms ; he knew both perfectly well ! She was imperious, she was light-minded, she was flighty, she was false, she had no reverence in her character ; she was in everything, even in beauty, the contrast of her

## Her Infinite Variety

mother, who was the most devoted and the least selfish of women. Well, from the very first moment he saw her on the stairs at Walcote, Esmond knew he loved Beatrix. There might be better women—he wanted that one. He cared for none other. Was it because she was gloriously beautiful? Beautiful as she was, he had heard people say a score of times in their company that Beatrix's mother looked as young, and was the handsomer of the two. Why did her voice thrill in his ear so? She could not sing near so well as Nicolini or Mrs. Tofts; nay, she sang out of tune, and yet he liked to hear her better than St. Cecilia. She had not a finer complexion than Mrs. Steele (Dick's wife, whom he had now got, and who ruled poor Dick with a rod of pickle), and yet to see her dazzled Esmond; he would shut his eyes, and the thought of her dazzled him all the same. She was brilliant and lively in talk, but not so incomparably witty as her mother, who, when she was cheerful, said the finest things; but yet to hear her, and to be with her, was Esmond's greatest pleasure. Days passed away between him and these ladies, he scarce knew how. He poured his heart out to them, so as he never could in any other company, where he had generally passed for being moody, or supercilious and silent. This society was more delightful than that of the greatest wits to him.

*W. M. Thackeray*

Clara Middleton



SHE had the mouth that smiles in repose. The lips met full on the centre of the bow and thinned along to a lifting dimple; the eyelids also lifted slightly at the outer corners and seemed, like the lip into the







## A Special Trio

limpid cheek, quickening up the temples, as with a run of light, or the ascension indicated off a shoot of colour. Her features were play-fellows of one another, none of them pretending to rigid correctness, nor the nose to the ordinary dignity of a governess among merry girls, despite which the nose was of a fair design, not acutely interrogative or inviting to gambols. Aspens imaged in water, waiting for the breeze, would offer a susceptible lover some suggestion of her face : a pure smooth-white face, tenderly flushed in the cheeks, where the gentle dints were faintly intermelting even during quietness. Her eyes were brown, set well between mild lids, often shadowed, not unwakeful. Her hair of lighter brown, swelling above her temples on the sweep to the knot, imposed the triangle of the fabulous wild woodland visage from brow to mouth and chin, evidently in agreement with her taste ; and the triangle suited her ; but her face was not significant of a tameless wildness or of weakness ; her equable shut mouth threw its long curve to guard the small round chin from that effect ; her eyes wavered only in humour, they were steady when thoughtfulness was awakened ; and at such seasons the build of her winter-beechwood hair lost the touch of nymph-like and whimsical, and strangely, by mere outline, added to her appearance of studious concentration.

Observe the hawk on stretched wings over the prey he spies, for an idea of this change in the look of a young lady whom Vernon Whitford could liken to the Mountain Echo, and Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson pronounced to be "a dainty rogue in porcelain."

*George Meredith*

## Her Infinite Variety

Miss Jane Cox      

SHE is an East Indian and ought to be her grandfather's Heir. At the time I called Mrs. R. was in conference with her up stairs, calling her genteel, interesting and a thousand other pretty things to which I gave no heed, not being partial to 9 days' wonders. Now all is completely changed—they hate her, and from what I hear she is not without faults—of a real kind : but she has others which are more apt to make women of inferior charms hate her. She is not a Cleopatra, but she is at least a Charmian. She has a rich Eastern look ; she has fine eyes and fine manners. When she comes into a room she makes an impression the same as the Beauty of a Leopardess. She is too fine and too conscious of herself to repulse any Man who may address her—from habit she thinks that nothing *particular*. I always find myself more at ease with such a woman ; the picture before me always gives me a life and animation which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am at such times too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or on a tremble. I forget myself entirely because I live in her. You will by this time think I am in love with her ; so before I go any further I will tell you I am not—she kept me awake one Night as a tune of Mozart's might do. I speak of the thing as a pastime and an amusement than which I can feel none deeper than a conversation with an imperial woman the very “yes” and “no” of whose lips is to me a Banquet. I don't cry to take the Moon home with me in my Pocket, nor do I fret to leave her behind me. I like her and her like because one has no *sensations*—what we both are is taken for granted. You will suppose I have by this had much talk with her—no such thing—there are the Miss

## A Special Trio

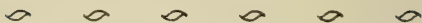
Reynoldses on the look out. They think I don't admire her because I did not stare at her. They call her a flirt to me. What a want of knowledge ! She walks across a room in such a Manner that a Man is drawn towards her with a magnetic Power. This they call flirting ! they do not know things. They do not know what a Woman is. I believe, tho', she has faults—the same as Charmian and Cleopatra might have had. Yet she is a fine thing, speaking in a worldly way : for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things—the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical ; and the unearthly, spiritual and ethereal—in the former, Buonaparte, Lord Byron, and this Charmian hold the first place in our Minds ; in the latter, John Howard, Bishop Horner rocking his child's cradle, and you, my dear Sister, are the conquering feelings. As a Man in the world I love the rich talk of a Charmian ; as an Eternal Being I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me.

*John Keats*

## XIII

### GOOD COMPANY

The Prioress



**T**HER was also a Nounne, a Prioressse,  
That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy ;  
Hire grettest ooth nas but by seynt Loy ;  
And sche was cleped Madame Eglentyne.  
Ful wel sche sang the servisë divyne,  
Entuned in hire nose ful semëly ;  
And Frensch she spak ful faire and fetysly,  
After the scole of Stratford attë Bowe,  
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.  
At metë wel i-taught was sche withalle,  
Sche leet no morsel from her lippës falle,  
Ne wette hire fynGRES in hire saucë deepe.  
Wel cowde sche carie a morsel and wel keepe,  
That no dropë ne fille upon hire breste.  
In curteisie was set ful moche hire leste.  
Hire over lippë wypede sche so clene,  
That in hire cuppë was no ferthing sene  
Of grecë, whan sche dronken hadde hire draughte.  
Ful semëly after hir mete sche raughte,  
And sikerly sche was of gret disport,  
And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,

## Good Company

And peynede hir to countrefetë cheere  
Of Court, and ben estatlich of manere,  
And to ben holden digne of reverance.  
But for to speken of hir conscience,  
Sche was so charitable and so pitous,  
Sche woldë weepe if that sche saw a mous  
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.  
Of smalë houndës hadde sche, that sche fedde  
With rosted flessch and mylk and wastel breed.  
But sore weep sche if oon of hem were deed,  
Or if men smot it, with a yerdë smerte ;  
And al was conscience and tendre herte.  
Ful semëly hire wympel i-pynched was ;  
Hir nosë streight, her eyën greye as glas ;  
Hir mouth ful smal, and thereto softe and reed,  
But sikerly sche hadde a fair forheed.  
It was almost a spannë brood, I trowe ;  
For hardily sche was not undergrowe.  
Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war.  
Of small coral aboute hir arm sche bar  
A peire of bedës gauded al with grene ;  
And thereon heng a broch of gold ful schene,  
On which was first i-writen a crowned A,  
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

*Chaucer*



## Her Infinite Variety

Hester Johnson

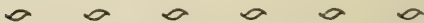


STELLA this day is thirty-four,  
(We shan't dispute a year or more :)  
However, Stella, be not troubled,  
Although thy size and years are doubled  
Since first I saw thee at sixteen,  
The brightest virgin on the green ;  
So little is thy form declined ;  
Made up so largely in thy mind.

O, would it please the gods to split  
Thy beauty, size, and years, and wit !  
No age could furnish out a pair  
Of nymphs so graceful, wise and fair ;  
With half the lustre of your eyes,  
With half your wit, your years, and size.  
And then, before it grew too late,  
How should I beg of gentle fate,  
(That either nymph might have her swain,)  
To split my worship too in twain.

*Dean Swift*

Mrs. Dingley



THIS day, dear Bec, is thy nativity ;  
Had Fate a luckier one, she'd give it ye.  
She chose a thread of greatest length,  
And doubly twisted it for strength :  
Nor will be able with her shears  
To cut it off these forty years.  
Then who says care will kill a cat ?  
Rebecca shews they're out in that.  
For she, though overrun with care,  
Continues healthy, fat, and fair.



## Good Company

As, if the gout should seize the head,  
Doctors pronounce the patient dead ;  
But, if they can, by all their arts,  
Eject it to the extremest parts,  
They give the sick man joy, and praise  
The gout that will prolong his days.  
Rebecca thus I gladly greet,  
Who drives her cares to hands and feet :  
For, though philosophers maintain  
The limbs are guided by the brain,  
Quite contrary Rebecca's led ;  
Her hands and feet conduct her head ;  
By arbitrary power convey her,  
She ne'er considers why or where :  
Her hands may meddle, feet may wander,  
Her head is but a mere by-stander :  
And all her bustling but supplies  
The part of wholesome exercise.  
Thus nature has resolved to pay her  
The cat's nine lives, and eke the care.

Long may she live, and help her friends  
Whene'er it suits her private ends ;  
Domestic business never mind  
Till coffee has her stomach lined ;  
But, when her breakfast gives her courage  
Then think on Stella's chicken porridge :  
I mean when Tiger<sup>1</sup> has been served,  
Or else poor Stella may be starved.

May Bec have many an evening nap,  
With Tiger slabbering in her lap ;  
But always take a special care  
She does not overset the chair ;

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Dingley's favourite lap-dog.

## Her Infinite Variety

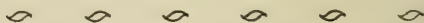
Still be she curious, never hearken  
To any speech but Tiger's barking !

And when she's in another scene,  
Stella long dead, but first the Dean,  
May fortune and her coffee get her  
Companions that will please her better !  
Whole afternoons will sit beside her,  
Nor for neglects or blunders chide her.  
A goodly set as can be found  
Of hearty gossips prating round ;  
Fresh from a wedding or a christening,  
To teach her ears the art of listening,  
And please her more to hear them tattle,  
Than the Dean storm, or Stella rattle.

Late be her death, one gentle nod,  
When Hermes, waiting with his rod,  
Shall to Elysian fields invite her,  
Where there will be no cares to fright her !

*Dean Swift*

Belinda



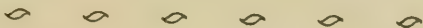
NOT with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,  
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,  
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his brains  
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.  
Fair nymphs, and well-dressed youths around her shone,  
But every eye was fix'd on her alone.  
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,  
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.  
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,  
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those :  
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends ;  
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.

## Good Company

Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,  
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.  
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,  
Might hide her fault, if belles had faults to hide :  
If to her share some female errors fall  
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all.

A. Pope

The Berrys



### I

I AM indeed much obliged for the transcript of the letter on my "Wives." Miss Agnes has a *finesse* in her eyes and countenance that does not propose itself to you, but is very engaging on observation, and has often made herself preferred to her sister, who has the most exactly fine features, and only wants colour to make her face as perfect as her graceful person ; indeed neither has good health nor the air of it. Miss Mary's eyes are grave, but she is not so herself ; and, having much more application than her sister, she converses readily, and with great intelligence, on all subjects. Agnes is more reserved, but her compact sense very striking, and always to the purpose. In short, they are extraordinary beings, and I am proud of my partiality for them ; and since the ridicule can only fall on me, and not on them, I care not a straw for its being said that I am in love with one of them—people shall choose which : it is as much with both as either, and I am infinitely too old to regard the *qu'en dit on*.

# Her Infinite Variety

## II

CONSIDER, that I have been threescore years and ten looking for a society that I perfectly like ; and at last there dropped out of the clouds into Lady Herries's room two young gentlewomen, who I so little thought were sent thither on purpose for me, that when I was told they were the charming Miss Berrys, I would not even go to the side of the chamber where they sat. But, as Fortune never throws anything at one's head without hitting one, I soon found that the charming Berrys were precisely *ce qu'il me fallait*; and that though young enough to be my great-grand-daughters, lovely enough to turn the heads of all our youths, and sensible enough, if said youths have any brains, to set all their heads to rights again.

*Horace Walpole*

Margaret Fordyce



BUT, hark !—did not our bard repeat  
The love-born name of M—a —g—r— ?—  
Attention seizes every ear ;  
We pant for the description *here* :  
If ever dulness left thy brow,  
“ *Pindar*,” we say, “ ’twill leave thee now.”  
But oh ! old Dulness’ son anointed  
His mother never disappointed !—  
And here we all were left to seek  
A dimple in F—rd—ce’s cheek !

And could you really discover,  
In gazing those sweet beauties over,  
No other charm, no winning grace,  
Adorning either mind or face,

## Good Company

But one poor *dimple*, to express  
The *quintessence* of loveliness?  
. . . Mark'd you her cheek of rosy hue?  
Mark'd you her eye of sparkling blue?  
That eye, in liquid circles moving;  
That cheek abash'd at Man's approving.  
The *one*, Love's arrows darting round;  
The *other*, blushing at the wound:  
Did she not speak, did she not move,  
Now *Pallas*—now the Queen of Love!

. . . . .  
We see the Dame, in rustic pride,  
A bunch of keys to grace her side,  
Stalking across the well-swept entry,  
To hold her council in the pantry,  
Or, with prophetic soul, foretelling  
The peas will boil well by the shelling;  
Or, bustling in her private closet,  
Prepare her lord his morning posset;  
And while the hallow'd mixture thickens,  
Signing death-warrants for the chickens;  
Else, greatly pensive, pouring o'er  
Accounts her cook hath thumb'd before;  
One eye cast up upon that *great book*,  
Yclep'd *The Family Receipt Book*;  
By which she's rul'd in all her courses,  
From stewing figs to drenching horses.  
—Then pans and pickling skillets rise,  
In dreadful lustre, to our eyes,  
With store of sweetmeats, rang'd in order,  
And *potted nothings* on the border;  
While salves and caudle-cups between,  
With squalling children, close the scene.

## Her Infinite Variety

O ! should your genius ever rise,  
And make you Laureate in the skies,  
I'd hold my life, in twenty years,  
You'd spoil the *music* of the *spheres*.  
—Nay, should the rapture-breathing Nine  
In one celestial concert join,  
Their sovereign's power to rehearse,  
—Were you to furnish men with verse,  
By Jove, I'd fly the heavenly throng,  
Tho' *Phæbus* play'd and Linley sung.

*R. B. Sheridan*

Miss Waldron    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

ANOTHER of the sisterhood was Miss Waldron, late of Tamworth,—dear, good-humoured, hearty, masculine Miss Waldron, who could sing a jovial song like a fox-hunter, and like him I had almost said toss a glass ; and yet was there such an air of high *ton*, and such intellect mingled with these manners, that the perfect lady was not veiled for a moment,—no, not when, with a face rosy red, and an eye beaming with mirth, she would seize a cup and sing “Toby Fillpot,” glorying as it were in her own jollity. When we took our morning rides, she generally drove my father in her phaeton, and interested him exceedingly by her strong understanding and conversational powers.

*George Crabbe the Younger*

Lady Ashburton    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

LADY ASHBURTON was perhaps, on the whole, the most conspicuous woman in the society of the present day. She was undoubtedly very intelligent,

## Good Company

with much quickness and vivacity in conversation, and by dint of a good deal of desultory reading and social intercourse with men more or less distinguished, she had improved her mind, and made herself a very agreeable woman, and had acquired no small reputation for ability and wit. It is never difficult for a woman in a great position and with some talent for conversation to attract a large society around her, and to have a number of admirers and devoted *habitués*. Lady Ashburton laid herself out for this, and while she exercised hospitality on a great scale, she was more of a *précieuse* than any woman I have known. She was, or affected to be, extremely intimate with many men whose literary celebrity or talents constituted their only attraction, and while they were gratified by the attentions of the great lady, her vanity was flattered by the homage of such men, of whom Carlyle was the principal. It is only justice to her to say that she treated her literary friends with constant kindness and the most unselfish attentions. They, their wives and children (when they had any), were received at her house in the country, and entertained there for weeks without any airs of patronage, and with a spirit of genuine benevolence as well as hospitality. She was in her youth tall and commanding in person, but without any pretension to good looks; still she was not altogether destitute of sentiment and coquetry, or incapable of both feeling and inspiring a certain amount of passion. The only man with whom she was ever what could be called *in love* was Clarendon, and that feeling was never entirely extinct, and the recollection of it kept up a sort of undefined relation between them to the end of her life. Two men were certainly in love with her, both distinguished in different ways. One was John Mill, who was sentimentally



## Her Infinite Variety

attached to her, and for a long time was devoted to her society. She was pleased and flattered by his devotion, but as she did not in the slightest degree return his passion, though she admired his abilities; he at last came to resent her indifference, and ended by estranging himself from her entirely, and proved the strength of his feeling by his obstinate refusal to continue even his acquaintance with her. Her other admirer was Charles Buller, with whom she was extremely intimate, but without ever reciprocating his love. Curiously enough, they were very like each other in person, as well as in their mental accomplishments. They had both the same spirits and cleverness in conversation, and the same quickness and drollery in repartee. I remember Allen well describing them, when he said that their talk was like that in the polite conversation between Never Out and Miss Notable. Her faults appeared to be caprice and a disposition to quarrels and *tracasseries* about nothing, which, however common amongst ordinary women, were unworthy of her superior understanding. But during her last illness all that was bad and hard in her nature seemed to be improved and softened, and she became full of charity, good-will, and the milk of human kindness.

Charles Greville

Lady Ashburton's Sayings    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

HOW fortunate that I am not married to King Leopold ! He said to his French wife, "*Pas de propos légers.*" I suppose he meant "No jokes." Now I like nothing else—I should wish to be accountable for nothing I said, and to contradict myself every minute.

It is dreadful for me to have no domestic duties, I



## Good Company

always envy the German women. I am a "cuisinière incomprise."

I always feel a kind of average between myself and any other person I am talking with—between us two, I mean: so that when I am talking to Spedding—I am unutterably foolish—beyond permission.

I like you to say the civil things, and then I can do the contrary.

In one's youth one doubts whether one has a body, and when one gets old whether one has a soul; but the body asserts itself so much the stronger of the two.

I have not only never written a book, but I know nobody whose book I should like to have written.

I remember when a child telling everybody I was present at mamma's marriage. I was whipped for it, but I believed it all the same.

When I am with High-Church people, my opposition to them makes me feel no church at all—hardly bare walls with doors and windows.

I forget everything, except injuries.

I should like exactly to know the difference between money and morality.

I have no objection to the canvas of a man's mind being good if it is entirely hidden under the worsted and floss, and so on.

Public men in England are so fenced in by the cactus-hedge of petty conventionality which they call practical life, that everything good and humane is invisible to them. Add to this the absence of humour, and you see all their wretchedness. I have never known but two men above this—Buller and Peel.

A bore cannot be a good man: for the better a man is, the greater bore he will be, and the more hateful he will make goodness.

## Her Infinite Variety

I am sure you find nine persons out of ten, what at first you assume them to be.

When one sees what marriage generally is, I quite wonder that women do not give up the profession.

Your notion of a wife is evidently a Strasbourg goose whom you will always find by the fireside when you come home from amusing yourself.

Of course there will be slavery in the world as long as there is a black and a white—a man and a woman.

I am strongly in favour of Polygamy. I should like to go out, and the other wife to stay at home and take care of things, and hear all I had to tell her when I came back.

— looks all a woman wants—strength and cruelty.

The most dreadful thing against women is the character of the men that praise them.

I like men to be men ; you cannot get round them without.

Friendship has no doubt great advantages ; you know a man so much better and can laugh at him so much more.

If I were to begin life again, I would go on the turf, merely to get friends : they seem to me the only people who really hold close together. I don't know why : it may be that each man knows something that might hang the other ; but the effect is delightful and most peculiar.

I never want friends if I have sun—or at most one who does not speak.

To have a really agreeable house, you must be divorced ; you would then have the pleasantest men, and no women but those who are really affectionate and interested about you, and who are kept in continual good-humour by the consciousness of a benevolent

## Good Company

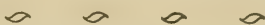
patronage. I often think of divorcing myself from B. B. and marrying him again.

There is no rebound about her : it is like talking into a soft surface.

English society is destroyed by domestic life out of place. You meet eight people at dinner—four couples, each of whom sees as much as they wish of one another elsewhere, and each member of which is embarrassed and afraid in the other's presence.

*Lord Houghton*

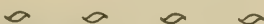
Staff Nurse : Old Style



THE greater masters of the commonplace,  
REMBRANDT and good SIR WALTER—only these  
Could paint her all to you : experienced ease,  
And antique liveliness, and ponderous grace ;  
The sweet old roses of her sunken face ;  
The depth and malice of her sly gray eyes ;  
The broad Scots tongue that flatters, scolds, defies ;  
The thick Scots wit that fells you like a mace.  
These thirty years she has been nursing here,  
Some of them under SYME, her hero still.  
Much is she worth, and even more is made of her.  
Patients and students hold her very dear.  
The doctors love her, tease her, use her skill.  
They say "The Chief" himself is half-afraid of her.

*W. E. Henley*

Staff Nurse : New Style









BLUE-EYED and bright of face, but waning fast  
Into the sere of virginal decay  
I view her as she enters, day by day,  
As a sweet sunset almost overpast.

## Her Infinite Variety

Kindly and calm, patrician to the last,  
Superbly falls her gown of sober gray,  
And on her chignon's elegant array  
The plainest cap is somehow touched with caste.  
She talks BEETHOVEN, frowns disapprobation  
At BALZAC'S name, sighs it at "poor GEORGE SAND'S";  
Knows that she has exceeding pretty hands;  
Speaks Latin with a right accentuation;  
And gives at need (as one who understands)  
Draught, counsel, diagnosis, exhortation.

*W. E. Henley*

Mrs. Grote                                    

MRS. GROTE, wife of George Grote, the banker, member of Parliament, and historian of Greece, was one of the cleverest and most eccentric women in the London Society of my time. No worse a judge than De Tocqueville pronounced her the cleverest woman of his acquaintance; and she was certainly a very remarkable member of the circle of remarkable men among whom she was living, when I first knew her. At that time she was the female centre of the Radical party in politics—a sort of not-young-or-hand-some feminine oracle, among a set of very clever half-heathenish men, in whose drawing-room, Sydney Smith used to say, he always expected to find an altar to Zeus. . . .

Mrs. Grote's appearance was extremely singular; "striking" is, I think, the most appropriate word for it. She was very tall, square-built, and high-shouldered, her hands and arms, feet and legs (the latter she was by no means averse to displaying), were uncommonly

## Good Company

handsome and well made. Her face was rather that of a clever man than a woman, and I used to think there was some resemblance between herself and our piratical friend, Trelawney.

Her familiar style of language among her intimates was something that could only be believed by those who heard it ; it was technical to a degree that was amazing. But little usual as her modes of expression were, she never seemed to be in the slightest degree aware of the startling effect they produced ; she uttered them with the most straightforward unconsciousness and unconcern.

Her taste in dress was, as might have been expected, slightly eccentric, but, for a person with so discordant colours, was singular. The first time I ever saw her she was dressed in a bright brimstone-coloured silk gown, made so short as to show her feet and ankles, having on her head a white satin hat, with a forest of white feathers ; and I remember her standing, with her feet wide apart and her arms akimbo, in this costume before me, and challenging me upon some political question by which, and her appearance, I was much astonished and a little frightened. One evening she came to my sister's house dressed entirely in black, but with scarlet shoes on, with which I suppose she was particularly pleased, for she lay on a sofa with her feet higher than her head, American fashion, the better to display or contemplate them. I remember, at a party, being seated by Sydney Smith, when Mrs. Grote entered with a rose-coloured turban on her head, at which he suddenly exclaimed, "Now I know the meaning of the word grotesque !"

The mischievous wit professed his cordial liking for both her and her husband, saying, "I like them, I like

## Her Infinite Variety

them ; I like him, he is so ladylike ; and I like her, she's such a perfect gentleman.'

*Fanny Kemble*

Mrs. Procter    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

STEP-DAUGHTER of Basil Montagu, the most accomplished editor of Bacon prior to Mr. Spedding ; widow of Barry Cornwall the poet, the intimate friend and the biographer of Charles Lamb ; mother of Adelaide Procter the poetess, the ornament of anthologies when anthologies are not, as we may say, pedantic ; friend of a hundred eminent men, and perpetuator, for our age, of the tone of an age not ours, she requires, no doubt, some introduction to a mistimed generation. Introductions of Mrs. Procter, however, are difficult ; they were in her lifetime all but impossible ; they assumed ignorances on the part of others, just as they assumed preoccupations on her own, that were, on the whole, less of a nature to clear the air than of a nature to cloud it.

For the present perhaps too easily and too variously solicited chronicler she had at all events, as an admirable friend, during her latest years, a value that he always qualified, to himself, as historic ; and not at all, moreover, in the comparatively superficial sense of her associations and accretions, her extraordinary names and dates, her long backward span and her persistent presence, but in the finer one of her being such a character, such a figure, as the generations appear pretty well to have ceased to produce, quite as if the technical secret of the "paste," like that of some old fabric or mixture, had been lost to them. "There are no more

## Good Company

made"—that might well be the answer given across the social counter to an inquirer curious of reasons. It was her tone that was her value and her identity, and that kept her from being feebly modern ; her sharpness of outline was in *that* in the absence there of the little modern mercies, muddlements, confusions and compromises. English to the core and thoroughly of her class, of her social affiliation, infinitely humorous and human, with perfect distinctness of wit and dauntlessness of opinion, a partisan to her last breath (which meant, on her part, an admirable constancy of favour and of its opposite), she testified somehow to a stouter and harder world than ours, an order more decreed and accepted, one in which the temper had had more at once to give and more to take, more to reckon with, but also more, within its rights, to maintain. Mrs. Procter's rights were, to take her own view, of the sharpest, but they included, delightfully, the right to be, however inconsequently (if that was the only way), pleased ; which she employed with the finest effect. I remember her once telling me, in answer to some question, after Dowden's Life of Shelley had come out, that she recalled, from her girlhood, an occasion on which Leigh Hunt had said, in her father's house, that he was going up to Hampstead to see what Shelley's "new wife was like" ; and that she also recalled his saying, on her asking him, at the next opportunity, for news of his errand : "Oh, she's like a cross baby." This reminiscence, I further recollect, had been determined by my asking her if she had known Mrs. Shelley on the latter's return to England. "Oh dear, no—one *didn't* know her ; she wasn't received" : that was a picture, I recall, precious for the old tone. But it was on my marvelling, a little irreflectively, at the antiquity of her



## Her Infinite Variety






having had such an acquaintance at her command, that she had said, "Oh, that's nothing—for going back," and then had gone back to the grey eld that was so much anterior to Shelley's death and *a fortiori* so much anterior to Byron's. I retail this anecdote, however, precisely to emphasise my point that, interesting as her anecdotes might be, her attitude and her spirit (facts quite as definite, and certainly quite as "quaint" as her anecdotes) were things more interesting still. More even than the anecdotes they seemed to make a light, as to the social world which had been not as ours, on the question of human relations. If one arrived at something of a sense of such relations one sniffed up the essence of history—to which in the absence of that sense one remained blackly a stranger. And it glimmered before one as something the precious possession of which might bring one nearer to the ancient reality. Without it one was, at any rate in respect to any reproductive grasp of the ancient reality, a "muff." All this, however, is a far cry from the fleeting vision vouchsafed to our friends in the summer of 1850—albeit, at the same time, that connections are not wanting. There was, for instance, no more "regular" friend of the trenchant lady's final period than Robert Browning, who was also, with a deeper shade of intimacy, an ally (as we have seen him already begin to be) of the Storys. She was, in addition, thoroughly well-affected to Lowell, who was equally so to her; and these facts would have in some degree constituted a relation with her, her friends not being non-conductors, for others, so to speak, of her relation to *them*. This last truth, I may perhaps add, is lighted for me, with some intensity, by my own last reminiscence: a grey, wintry day and the company, in a mourning-coach, during slow funereal hours, of



## Good Company

Browning and Kinglake, my companions of the pilgrimage. That was an occasion, verily, for as fine an appreciation of shades of intimacy as one might have cared to attempt. Browning was infinitely talkative, and Kinglake, old, deaf, delicate, distinguished, perfect, infinitely silent. Mrs. Procter, whose displeasure he had incurred, had not spoken to him for a quarter of a century. She was magnificent.

*Henry James*

Lady Everingham                              

LADY Everingham was not a celebrated beauty, but she was something infinitely more delightful, a captivating woman. There were combined in her, qualities not commonly met together, great vivacity of mind with great grace of manner. Her words sparkled and her movements charmed. There was indeed, in all she said and did, that congruity that indicates a complete and harmonious organisation. It was the same just proportion which characterised her form: a shape slight and undulating with grace; the most beautifully shaped ear; a small, soft hand; a foot that would have fitted the glass slipper; and which, by the bye, she lost no opportunity of displaying; and she was right, for it was a model.

*B. Disraeli*

## XIV

### THE GENTLE

A good woman is an understudy for an angel.  
*Tom Taylor (in "David Garrick")*

Lady Morton    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**H**E first deceased ; she for a little tried  
To live without him, liked it not, and died.  
*Sir Henry Wotton*

Sister Saint Luke    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**S**HE lived shut in by flowers and trees  
And shade of gentle bigotries.  
On this side lay the trackless sea,  
On that the great world's mystery ;  
But all unseen and all unguessed  
They could not break upon her rest.  
The world's far splendours gleamed and flashed,  
Afar the wild seas foamed and dashed ;  
But in her small, dull Paradise,  
Safe housed from rapture or surprise,  
Nor day nor night had power to fright  
The peace of God that filled her eyes.

*John Hay*

## The Gentle

Edith    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

(From *Aylmer's Field*)

FAIRER than Rachel by the palmy well,  
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she seem'd,  
Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.  
For so mine own was brighten'd: where indeed  
The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven  
Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway? whose the  
babe

Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of shame  
The common care whom no one cared for, leapt  
To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
As with the mother he had never known,  
In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes  
Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
That all neglected places of the field  
Broke into nature's music when they saw her.  
Low was her voice, but won mysterious way  
Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one  
Was all but silence—free of alms her hand—  
The hand that robed your cottage-walls with  
flowers

Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;  
How often placed upon the sick man's brow,  
Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth!  
Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?  
One burthen and she would not lighten it?  
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?  
Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,  
How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,

## Her Infinite Variety

And steal you from each other ! for she walk'd  
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love  
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee !

*Lord Tennyson*

Madam Liberality



MADAM LIBERALITY made up her mind about the dresses and aprons ; then she opened her letter.

It announced the death of her cousin, her god-mother's husband. It announced also that, in spite of the closest search for a will, which he was supposed to have made, this could not be found. . . .

After a second reading Madam Liberality picked up the thread of the narrative and arrived at the result—she had inherited fifteen thousand a year. . . .

Madam Liberality poked the fire extravagantly, and sat down to think.

The curtains naturally led her to household questions, and those to that invaluable person, Jemima. That Jemima's wages should be doubled, trebled, quadrupled, was a thing of course. What post she was to fill in the new circumstances was another matter. Remembering Podmore, and recalling the fatigue of dressing herself after her pretty numerous illnesses, Madam Liberality felt that a lady's-maid would be a comfort to be most thankful for. But she could not fancy Jemima in that capacity, or as a housekeeper, or even as head house-maid or cook. She had lived for years with Jemima herself, but she could not fit her into a suitable place in the servants' hall.

However, with fifteen thousand a year, Madam

## The Gentle

Liberality could buy, if needful, a field, and build a house, and put Jemima into it with a servant to wait upon her. The really important question was about her new domestics. Sixteen servants are a heavy responsibility.

Madam Liberality had very high ideas of the parental duties involved in being the head of a household. She had suffered—more than Jemima—over Jemima's lack of scruple as to telling lies for good purposes. Now a footman is a young man who has, no doubt, his own peculiar temptations. What check could Madam Liberality keep upon him? Possibly she might—under the strong pressure of moral responsibility—give good general advice to the footman; but the idea of the butler troubled her.

When one has lived alone in a little house for many years one gets timid. She put a case to herself. Say that she knew the butler to be in the habit of stealing the wine, and suspected the gardener of making a good income by the best of the wall fruit, would she have the moral courage to be as firm with these important personages as if she had caught one of the school-children picking and stealing in the orchard? And if not, would not family prayers be a mockery? . . .

There remained, however, Madam Liberality's old consolation: one can be happy in the happiness of others. There were nephews and nieces to be provided for, and a world so full of poor and struggling folk that fifteen thousand a year would only go a little way. It was, perhaps, useful that there had been so many articles lately in the papers about begging letters, and impostors, and the evil effects of the indiscriminate charity of elderly ladies; but the remembrance of them made Madam Liberality's head ache, and troubled her dreams that night.

## Her Infinite Variety

It was well that the next day was Sunday. Face to face with those greater interests common to the rich and the poor, the living and the dead, Madam Liberality grew calmer under her new cares and prospects. It did not need that brief pause by her mother's grave to remind her how little money can do for us ; and the sight of other people wholesomely recalled how much it can effect. Near the church porch she was passed by the wife of a retired chandler, who dressed in very fine silks, and who was accustomed to eye Madam Liberality's old clothes as she bowed to her more obviously than is consistent with good breeding. The little lady nodded very kindly in return. With fifteen thousand a year one can afford to be *quite* at ease in an old shawl.

The next day was Christmas Eve. Madam Liberality caught herself thinking that if the legacy had been smaller—say fifty pounds a year—she would at once have treated herself to certain little embellishments of the old house, for which she had long been ambitious. But it would be absurd to buy two or three yards of rosebud chintz, and tire herself by making covers to two very old sofa-cushions, when the point to be decided was in which of three grandly furnished mansions she would first take up her abode. She ordered a liberal supper, however, which confirmed Jemima in her secret opinion that the big letter had brought good news.

When, therefore, another letter of similar appearance arrived, Jemima snatched up the waiter and burst breathlessly in upon Madam Liberality, leaving the door open behind her, though it was bitterly cold and the snow fell fast.

And when Madam Liberality opened this letter she learned that her cousin's will had been found, and that

## The Gentle

(as seems to be natural) he had left his money where it would be associated with more money and kept well together. His heir was a cousin also, but in the next degree—an old bachelor, who was already wealthy ; and he had left Madam Liberality five pounds to buy a mourning ring.

It had been said that Madam Liberality was used to disappointment, but some minutes passed before she quite realised the downfall of her latest visions. Then the old sofa-cushions resumed their importance, and she flattened the fire into a more economical shape, and set vigorously to work to decorate the house with the Christmas evergreens.

*Mrs. Ewing*

Visitor    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

HER little face is like a walnut shell  
With wrinkling lines ; her soft, white hair adorns  
Her either brow in quaint, straight curls, like horns ;  
And all about her clings an old, sweet smell.  
Prim is her gown and quakerlike her shawl.  
Well might her bonnets have been born on her.  
Can you conceive a Fairy Godmother  
The subject of a real religious call ?  
In snow or shine, from bed to bed she runs,  
Her mittened hands, that ever give or pray,  
Bearing a sheaf of tracts, a bag of buns,  
All twinkling smiles and texts and pious tales :  
A wee old maid that sweeps the Bridegroom's way,  
Strong in a cheerful trust that never fails.

*W. E. Henley*

# Her Infinite Variety

Lucy Lyttleton



To the Memory of

LUCY LYTTLETON,

daughter of Hugh Fortescue of Filleigh,  
in the county of Devon, esq.

father to the present Earl of Clinton,  
by Lucy his wife,

the daughter of Matthew Lord Aylmer,  
who departed this life the 19th of Jan. 1746-7,  
aged twenty-nine ;

having employed the short time assigned to her here  
in the uniform practice of Religion and Virtue.

Made to engage all hearts, and charm all eyes,  
Though meek, magnanimous, though witty, wise ;  
Polite, as all her life in courts had been,  
Yet good, as she the world had never seen ;  
The noble fire of an exalted mind,  
With gentlest female tenderness combin'd.  
Her speech was the melodious voice of love,  
Her song the warbling of the vernal grove.  
Her eloquence was sweeter than her song,  
Soft as her heart, and as her reason strong,  
Her form each beauty of her mind exprest,  
Her mind was Virtue by the Graces drest.

*Anon.*



## XV

### MOTHERS

Look ! how this love, this mother, runs thro' all  
The world God made—even the beast—the bird !

*Lord Tennyson ("Becket")*

Eve



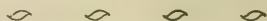
FROM this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend  
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind  
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.  
Two, of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
Godlike erect, with native honour clad  
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,  
And worthy seemed ; for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shone,  
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—  
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed.  
Whence true authority in men : though both  
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;  
For contemplation he and valour formed,  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace ;  
He for God only, she for God in him.  
His fair large front and eye sublime declared  
Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung

## Her Infinite Variety

Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad :  
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,  
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore  
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved.  
As the vine curls her tendrils—which implied  
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,  
And by her yielded, by him best received  
Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride.

*John Milton*

### The Mother of Marcella



I THINK I see her now, with that goodly presence,  
looking as if she had the sun on one side of her  
and the moon on the other ; and above all, she was a  
notable house-wife, and a friend to the poor ; for which  
I believe her soul is at this very moment in heaven.

*Pedro, in "Don Quixote"*

### A Roman Wife



WOMAN, a word with you !  
Round-ribbed, large-flanked,  
Broad-shouldered (God be thanked !)  
Face fair and free,  
And pleasant for a man to see—  
I know not whom you love ; but—hark ! be true.  
Partake his honest joys ;  
Cling to him, grow to him, make noble boys  
For Italy.

*T. E. Brown*

## Mothers

Dame Hester Temple    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

DAME Hester Temple, daughter to Miles Sands, Esquire, was born at Latinos in this County ; and was married to Sir Thomas Temple of Stow, Baronet. She had four sons and nine daughters, which lived to be married, and so exceedingly multiplied, that this Lady saw seven hundred extracted from her body. Reader, I speak within compass, and have left myself a reserve, having bought the truth hereof by a wager I lost. Besides, there was a new generation of *marriageable females* just at her death ; so that this *aged vine* may be said to *wither*, even when it had many young boughs *ready to knit*.

Had I been one of her Relations, and as well enabled as most of them be, I would have erected a Monument for her, thus designed. A fair tree should have been erected, the said Lady and her Husband lying at the bottom or the root thereof ; the Heir of the family should have ascended both the *middle* and *top-bough* thereof. On the right-hand hereof her *younger sons*, on the left her *daughters* should, as so many *boughs*, be spread forth. Her *grand-children* should have their names inscribed on the *branches* of those *boughs* ; the *great-grand-children* on the *twiggs* of those *branches* ; the *great-great-grand-children* on the *leaves* of those *twiggs*. Such as survived her death should be done in a lively green, the rest (as blasted) in a pale and yellow fading colour. . . .

Thus, in all ages, God bestoweth personal felicities on some, far above the proportion of others. The Lady Temple dyed anno Domini 1656.

Thomas Fuller

## Her Infinite Variety

A Forecast

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail !  
There is a nest in a green dale,  
A harbour and a hold ;  
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see  
Thy own delightful days, and be  
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a Shepherd-boy,  
And treading among flowers of joy  
Which at no season fade,  
Thou, while thy Babes around thee cling,  
Shalt show us how divine a thing  
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,  
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,  
A melancholy slave ;  
But an old age serene and bright,  
And lovely as a Lapland night,  
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

*W. Wordsworth*

George Herbert's Mother

NO spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace  
As I have seen in one autumnal face ;  
Young beauties force our love, and that's a rape ;  
This doth but counsel, yet you cannot 'scape.







## Mothers

If 'twere a shame to love, here 'twere no shame ;  
Affections here take reverence's name.  
Were her first years the Golden Age? that's true,  
But now they're gold oft tried, and ever new.  
That was her torrid and inflaming time ;  
This is her tolerable tropic clime.  
Fair eyes ; who asks more heat than comes from hence  
He in a fever wishes pestilence.  
Call not these wrinkles, graves ; if graves they were,  
They were Love's graves, for else he is nowhere.  
Yet lies not Love dead here, but here doth sit,  
Vow'd to this trench, like [to] an anchorite,  
And here, till hers, which must be his death, come,  
He doth not dig a grave, but build a tomb.  
Here dwells he ; though he sojourns everywhere  
In progress, yet his standing house is here ;  
Here, where still evening is, not noon, nor night ;  
Where no voluptuousness, yet all delight.  
In all her words, unto all hearers fit,  
You may at revels, you at council, sit.  
This is love's timber ; youth his underwood ;  
There he, as wine in June, enrages blood ;  
Which then comes seasonablest when our taste  
And appetite to other things is past.  
Xerxes' strange Lydian love, the platane tree,  
Was lov'd for age, none being so large as she ;  
Or else because, being young, nature did bless  
Her youth with age's glory, barrenness.  
If we love things long sought, age is a thing  
Which we are fifty years in compassing ;  
If transitory things, which soon decay,  
Age must be loveliest at the latest day.  
But name not winter faces, whose skins slack,  
Lank as an unthrift's purse, but a soul's sack ;

## Her Infinite Variety



Whose eyes seek light within ; for all here's shade ;  
Whose mouths are holes, rather worn out, than made ;  
Whose every tooth to a several place is gone,  
To vex their souls at resurrection ;  
Name not these living death-heads unto me,  
For these, not ancient, but antique be.  
I hate extremes ; yet I had rather stay  
With tombs than cradles, to wear out a day.  
Since such love's motion natural is, may still  
My love descend, and journey down the hill.  
Not panting after growing beauties ; so  
I shall ebb out with them who homeward go.

*John Donne*

Pope's Mother      

A H Editha !  
Matrum Optima !  
Mulierum Amantissima !  
Vale !

*Epitaph at Twickenham*

Susanna Wesley (by epistolary illumination)  

EPWORTH, *July 24th*, 1732

DEAR SON,—According to your desire, I have collected the principal rules I observed in educating my family. . . .

The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from

## Mothers

their birth ; as in dressing and undressing, changing their linen, &c. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep. After that they were, if possible, laid into their cradle awake, and rocked to sleep, and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping, which at first was three hours in the morning, and three in the afternoon ; afterwards two hours till they needed none at all. When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod and to cry softly, by which means they escaped abundance of correction which they might otherwise have had, and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house, but the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them.

As soon as they were grown pretty strong they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little tables and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked ; and they were suffered to eat and drink (small beer) as much as they would, but not to call for anything. If they wanted aught they used to whisper to the maid that attended them, who came and spoke to me ; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork they were set to our table. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family. Mornings they always had spoon-meat ; sometimes at nights. But whatever they had, they were never permitted at those meals to eat of more than one thing, and of that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed, unless in case of sickness, which seldom happened. Nor were they suffered to go into the kitchen to ask anything of the servants when they were at meat : if it was known they did so, they were certainly beat, and

## Her Infinite Variety

the servants severely reprimanded. At six, as soon as family prayer was over, they had their supper ; at seven the maid washed them, and, beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight, at which time she left them in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed of in our house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.

They were so constantly used to eat and drink what was given them that when any of them was ill there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine ; for they durst not refuse it, though some of them would presently throw it up. This I mention to show that a person may be taught to take anything, though it be never so much against his stomach. . . .

Our children were taught as soon as they could speak the Lord's prayer, which they were made to say at rising and at bedtime constantly, to which, as they grew bigger, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some collects, a short catechism, and some portion of Scripture as their memories could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days, before they could well speak or go. They were as soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs, before they could kneel or speak.

They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted. They were not suffered to ask even the lowest servant for aught without saying "Pray give me such a thing" ; and the servant was chid if she ever let them omit that word.

Taking God's name in vain, cursing and swearing, profanity, obscenity, rude ill-bred names, were never heard among them ; nor were they ever permitted to



## Mothers

call each other by their proper names without the addition of brother or sister. . . .

There was no such thing as loud playing or talking allowed of, but everyone was kept close to business for the six hours of school. And it is almost incredible what may be taught a child in a quarter of a year by a vigorous application, if it have but a tolerable capacity and good health. Every one of these, Kezzy excepted, all could read better in that time than the most of women can do as long as they live. Rising out of their places, or going out of the room, was not permitted except for good cause ; and running into the yard, garden, or street, without leave, was always esteemed a capital offence. . . .

*Susanna Wesley*

### Cowper's Mother



THAT those lips had language ! Life has passed  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.

Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
The same, that oft in childhood solac'd me ;  
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
“Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away !”

The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,  
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
O welcome guest, though unexpected here !  
Who bid'st me honour with an artless song,  
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,  
I will obey, not willingly alone,  
But gladly, as the precept were her own :

## Her Infinite Variety

And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast  
dead,

Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone,  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!  
Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,  
And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.  
By expectation ev'ry day beguil'd,  
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,  
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,  
But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor;  
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the public way,

## Mothers

Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,  
'Tis now become a hist'ry little known,  
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.  
Short-liv'd possession ! but the record fair,  
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm, that has effac'd  
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid ;  
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;  
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd  
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd :  
All this, and more endearing still than all,  
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,  
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,  
That humour interpos'd too often makes :  
All this still legible in memory's page,  
And still to be so to my latest age,  
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;  
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
Not scorn'd in Heav'n, though little notic'd here.

Could Time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,  
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flow'rs,  
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,  
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile),  
Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?  
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might.—

## Her Infinite Variety

But no—what here we call our life is such  
So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,  
That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Then, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)  
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,  
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
There sits quiescent on the floods that show  
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
While airs impregnated with incense play  
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;  
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the  
shore,

“Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,”  
And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide  
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.  
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—  
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,  
Sails ripp'd, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,  
And day by day some current's thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course.  
Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he !  
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth ;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
The son of parents passed into the skies.  
And now, farewell—Time unrevok'd has run  
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.  
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
I seem'd t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again ;  
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,

## Mothers

Without the sin of violating thine ;  
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,  
And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
Thyself remov'd, thy pow'r to soothe me left.

*W. Cowper*

### A Roman Mother



GOOD wife, good mother—yes, I know.  
But what a glow  
Of elemental fires !  
What breadth, what stately flow  
Of absolute desires—  
How bound  
To household task  
And daily round,  
It boots not ask !

Good mother, and good wife—  
These women seem to live suspended life.  
As lakes, dark-gleaming, till the night is done,  
Expect the sun,  
So these,  
That wont to hold Jove's offspring on their knees,  
Take current odds,  
Accept life's lees,  
And wait returning Gods.

*T. E. Brown*

## XVI

### THE WIFE PERFECT

I WILL tell you a story that was told me when I was a little boy. Every time I thought of this story, it seemed to me more and more charming ; for it is with stories as it is with many people—they become better as they grow older.

I have no doubt that you have been in the country, and seen a very old farmhouse, with a thatched roof, and mosses and small plants growing wild upon it. There is a stork's nest on the ridge of the gable, for we cannot do without the stork. The walls of the house are sloping, and the windows are low, and only one of the latter is made to open. The baking-oven sticks out of the wall like a great knob. An elder-tree hangs over the palings ; and beneath its branches, at the foot of the paling, is a pool of water, in which a few ducks are disporting themselves. There is a yard-dog too, who barks at all comers. Just such a farmhouse as this stood in a country lane ; and in it dwelt an old couple, a peasant and his wife. Small as their possessions were, they had one article they could not do without, and that was a horse, which contrived to live upon the grass which it found by the side of the high-road. The old peasant rode into the town upon his horse, and his neighbours often borrowed

## The Wife Perfect

it of him, and paid for the loan of it by rendering some service to the old couple. After a time they thought it would be as well to sell the horse, or exchange it for something which might be more useful to them. But what might this *something* be?

"You'll know best, old man," said the wife. "It is fair-day to-day; so ride into town, and get rid of the horse for money, or make a good exchange; whichever you do will be right to me, so ride to the fair."

And she fastened his neckerchief for him; for she could do that better than he could, and she could also tie it very prettily in a double bow. She also smoothed his hat round and round with the palm of her hand, and gave him a kiss. Then he rode away upon the horse that was to be sold or bartered for something else. Yes, the old man knew what he was about. The sun shone with great heat, and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. The road was very dusty; for a number of people, all going to the fair; were driving, riding, or walking upon it. There was no shelter anywhere from the hot sunshine. Among the rest, a man came trudging along and driving a cow to the fair. The cow was as beautiful a creature as any cow could be.

"She gives good milk, I am certain," said the peasant to himself. "That would be a very good exchange: the cow for the horse. Hallo there! you with the cow," he said. "I tell you what; I dare say a horse is of more value than a cow; but I don't care for that,—a cow will be more useful to me; so, if you like, we'll exchange."

"To be sure I will," said the man.

Accordingly the exchange was made; and as the matter was settled, the peasant might have turned back; for he had done the business he came to do. But, having

## Her Infinite Variety

made up his mind to go to the fair, he determined to do so, if only to have a look at it; so on he went to the town with his cow. Leading the animal, he strode on sturdily, and, after a short time, overtook a man who was driving a sheep. It was a good fat sheep, with a fine fleece on its back.

"I should like to have that fellow," said the peasant to himself. "There is plenty of grass for him by our palings, and in the winter we could keep him in the room with us. Perhaps it would be more profitable to have a sheep than a cow. Shall I exchange?"

The man with the sheep was quite ready, and the bargain was quickly made. And then our peasant continued his way on the high-road with his sheep. Soon after this, he overtook another man, who had come into the road from a field, and was carrying a large goose under his arm.

"What a heavy creature you have there!" said the peasant; "it has plenty of feathers and plenty of fat, and would look well tied to a string, or paddling in the water at our place. That would be very useful to my old woman; she could make all sorts of profit out of it. How often she has said, 'If now we only had a goose!' Now here is an opportunity, and, if possible, I will get it for her. Shall we exchange? I will give you my sheep for your goose, and thanks into the bargain."

The other had not the least objection, and accordingly the exchange was made, and our peasant became possessor of the goose. By this time, he had arrived very near the town. The crowd on the high-road had been gradually increasing, and there was quite a rush of men and cattle. The cattle walked on the path and by the palings, and at the turnpike-gate they even walked into the toll-keeper's potato-field, where one fowl was



## The Wife Perfect

strutting about with a string tied to its leg, for fear it should take fright at the crowd, and run away and get lost. The tail-feathers of this fowl were very short, and it winked with both its eyes, and looked very cunning, as it said, "Cluck, cluck." What were the thoughts of the fowl as it said this I cannot tell you ; but directly our good man saw it, he thought, "Why, that's the finest fowl I ever saw in my life ; it's finer than our parson's brood hen, upon my word. I should like to have that fowl. Fowls can always pick up a few grains that lie about, and almost keep themselves. I think it would be a good exchange if I could get it for my goose. Shall we exchange?" he asked the toll-keeper.

"Exchange," repeated the man ; "well, it would not be a bad thing."

And so they made an exchange,—the toll-keeper at the turnpike-gate kept the goose, and the peasant carried off the fowl. Now he really had done a great deal of business on his way to the fair, and he was hot and tired. He wanted something to eat, and a glass of ale to refresh himself ; so he turned his steps to an inn. He was just about to enter when the ostler came out, and they met at the door. The ostler was carrying a sack. "What have you in that sack?" asked the peasant.

"Rotten apples," answered the ostler ; "a whole sackful of them. They will do to feed the pigs with."

"Why, that will be terrible waste," he replied ; "I should like to take them home to my old woman. Last year the old apple-tree by the grass-plot only bore one apple, and we kept it in the cupboard till it was quite withered and rotten. It was always property, my old woman said ; and here she would see a great deal of

## Her Infinite Variety

property—a whole sackful : I should like to show them to her.”

“What will you give me for the sackful?” asked the ostler.

“What will I give? Well, I will give you my fowl in exchange.”

So he gave up the fowl, and received the apples, which he carried into the inn parlour. He leaned the sack carefully against the stove, and then went to the table. But the stove was hot, and he had not thought of that. Many guests were present—horse-dealers, cattle drovers, and two Englishmen. The Englishmen were so rich that their pockets quite bulged out and seemed ready to burst ; and they could bet too, as you shall hear. “Hiss—s—s, hiss—s—s.” What could that be by the stove? The apples were beginning to roast. “What is that?” asked one.

“Why, do you know——” said our peasant. And then he told them the whole story of the horse, which he had exchanged for a cow, and all the rest of it, down to the apples.

“Well, your old woman will give it you well when you get home,” said one of the Englishmen. “Won’t there be a noise?”

“What ! Give me what?” said the peasant. “Why, she will kiss me, and say, ‘what the old man does is always right.’”

“Let us lay a wager on it,” said the Englishman. “We’ll wager you a ton of coined gold, a hundred pounds to the hundredweight.”

“No ; a bushelful will be enough,” replied the peasant. “I can only set a bushel of apples against it, and I’ll throw myself and my old woman into the bargain ; that will pile up the measure, I fancy.”

## The Wife Perfect

"Done! taken!" and so the bet was made.

Then the landlord's coach came to the door, and the two Englishmen and the peasant got in, and away they drove, and soon arrived and stopped at the peasant's hut. "Good evening, old woman." "Good evening, old man." "I've made the exchange."

"Ah, well, you understand what you're about," said the woman. Then she embraced him, and paid no attention to the strangers, nor did she notice the sack.

"I got a cow in exchange for the horse."

"Thank Heaven," said she. "Now we shall have plenty of milk, and butter, and cheese on the table. That was a capital exchange."

"Yes, but I changed the cow for a sheep."

"Ah, better still!" cried the wife. "You always think of everything; we have just enough pasture for a sheep. Ewe's milk and cheese, woollen jackets and stockings! The cow could not give all these, and her hairs only fall off. How you think of everything!"

"But I changed away the sheep for a goose."

"Then we shall have roast goose to eat this year. You dear old man, you are always thinking of something to please me. This is delightful. We can let the goose walk about with a string tied to her leg, so she will be fatter still before we roast her."

"But I gave away the goose for a fowl."

"A fowl! Well, that was a good exchange," replied the woman. "The fowl will lay eggs and hatch them, and we shall have chickens; we shall soon have a poultry-yard. Oh, this is just what I was wishing for."

"Yes, but I exchanged the fowl for a sack of shrivelled apples."

## Her Infinite Variety

“What! I must really give you a kiss for that!” exclaimed the wife. “My dear, good husband, now I’ll tell you something. Do you know, almost as soon as you left me this morning I began thinking of what I could give you nice for supper this evening, and then I thought of fried eggs and bacon, with sweet herbs; I had eggs and bacon, but I wanted the herbs; so I went over to the schoolmaster’s: I knew they had plenty of herbs, but the schoolmistress is very mean, although she can smile so sweetly. I begged her to lend me a handful of herbs. ‘Lend!’ she exclaimed, ‘I have nothing to lend; nothing at all grows in our garden, not even a shrivelled apple; I could not even lend you a shrivelled apple, my dear woman.’ But now I can lend her ten, or a whole sackful, which I’m very glad of; it makes me laugh to think about it;” and then she gave him a hearty kiss.

“Well, I like all this,” said both the Englishmen; “always going down the hill, and yet always merry; it’s worth the money to see it.” So they paid a bushel of gold to the peasant, who, whatever he did, was not scolded, but kissed.

Yes, it always pays best when the wife sees and maintains that her husband knows best, and that whatever he does is right.

This is a story which I heard when I was a child; and now you have heard it too, and know that “What the old man does is always right.”

*H. C. Andersen*

## XVII

### FAMILY FRIENDS

'The Schoolmistress    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

N EAR to this dome is found a patch so green,  
On which the tribe their gambols do display,  
And at the door imprisoning board is seen,  
Lest weakly wights of smaller size should stray,  
Eager, perdie, to bask in sunny day !  
The noises intermix'd, which thence resound,  
Do Learning's little tenement betray,  
Where sits the dame, disguis'd in look profound,  
And eyes her fairy throng, and turns her wheel around.

Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,  
Emblem right meet of decency does yield ;  
Her apron dy'd in grain, as blue, I trow,  
As is the harebell that adorns the field ;  
And in her hand, for sceptre, she does wield  
Tway birchen sprays, with anxious fear entwin'd,  
With dark distrust, and sad repentance fill'd,  
And steadfast hate, and sharp affliction join'd,  
And fury uncontrol'd, and chastisement unkind. . . .

## Her Infinite Variety

A russet stole was o'er her shoulders thrown,  
A russet kirtle fenc'd the nipping air ;  
'Twas simple russet, but it was her own ;  
'Twas her own country bred the flock so fair ;  
'Twas her own labour did the fleece prepare ;  
And, sooth to say, her pupils, rang'd around,  
Through pious awe did term it passing rare,  
For they in gaping wonderment abound,  
And think, no doubt, she been the greatest wight on  
ground.

Albeit ne flattery did corrupt her truth,  
Ne pompous title did debauch her ear,  
Goody, good-woman, gossip, n'aunt, forsooth,  
Or dame, the sole additions she did hear ;  
Yet these she challeng'd, these she held right dear ;  
Ne would esteem him act as nought behove  
Who should not honour'd eld with these revere ;  
For never title yet so mean could prove,  
But there was eke a mind which did that title love.

One ancient hen she took delight to feed,  
The plodding pattern of the busy dame.  
Which ever and anon, impell'd by need,  
Into her school, begirt with chickens, came,  
Such favour did her past deportment claim ;  
And, if neglect had lavish'd on the ground  
Fragment of bread, she would collect the same ;  
For well she knew, and quaintly could expound,  
What sin it were to waste the smallest crumb she found.

Herbs too she knew, and well of each could speak  
That in her garden sipp'd the silvery dew,  
Where no vain flower disclos'd a gaudy streak,  
But herbs for use and physic, not a few

## Family Friends

Of grey renown, within those borders grew ;  
The tufted basil, pun-provoking thyme,  
Fresh baum, and marygold of cheerful hue,  
The lowly gill, that never dares to climb,  
And more I fain would sing, disdaining here to rhyme.

Yet euphrasy may not be left unsung,  
That gives dim eyes to wander leagues around,  
And pungent radish, biting infant's tongue,  
And plantain ribb'd, that heals the reaper's wound,  
And marjoram sweet, in shepherd's posie found,  
And lavender, whose pikes of azure bloom  
Shall be, erewhile, in arid bundles bound,  
To lurk amidst the labours of her loom,  
And crown her kerchiefs clean with mickle rare perfume. . . .

Here oft the dame, on Sabbath's decent eve,  
Hymned such psalms as Sternhold forth did mete ;  
If winter 'twere she to her hearth did cleave,  
But in her garden found a summer-seat :  
Sweet melody ! to hear her then repeat  
How Israel's sons, beneath a foreign king,  
While taunting foemen did a song entreat,  
All for the nonce untuning every string,  
Uphung their useless lyres—small heart had they to sing.

For she was just, and friend to virtuous lore,  
And pass'd much time in truly virtuous deed ;  
And in those elfins' ears would oft deplore  
The times when Truth by Popish rage did bleed,  
And tortuous death was true Devotion's meed ;  
And simple Faith in iron chains did mourn,  
That nould on wooden image place her creed ;

## Her Infinite Variety

And lawny saints in smouldering flames did burn :  
Ah ! dearest Lord ! forefend thilk days should e'er return.

*William Shenstone*

### The Nurse



**S**UCH innocent companionship  
Is hers, whether she wake or sleep,  
'Tis scarcely strange her face should wear  
The young child's grave and innocent air.

All the night long she hath by her  
The quiet breathing, the soft stir,  
Nor knows how in that tender place  
The children's angels veil the face.

She wakes at dawn with bird and child  
To earth new-washed and reconciled,  
The hour of silence and of dew,  
When God hath made His world anew.

She sleeps at eve, about the hour  
Of bedtime for the bird and flower,  
When daisies, evening primroses,  
Know that the hour of closing is.

Her daylight thoughts are all on toys  
And games for darling girls and boys,  
Lest they should fret, lest they should weep,  
Strayed from their heavenly fellowship.

She is as pretty and as brown  
As the wood's children far from town,



## Family Friends

As bright-eyed, glancing, shy of men  
As any squirrel, any wren.

Tender she is to beast and bird,  
As in her breast some memory stirred  
Of days when those were kin of hers  
Who go in feathers and in furs.

A child, yet is the children's law,  
And rules by love and rules by awe.  
And, stern at times, is kind withal  
As a girl-baby with her doll.

Outside the nursery door there lies  
The world with all its griefs and sighs,  
Its needs, its sins, its stain of sense :  
Within is only innocence.

*Katharine Tynan*

Prew, his Maid



IN this little urne is laid  
Prewdence Baldwin, once my maid,  
From whose happy spark here let  
Spring the purple violet.

*Robert Herrick*

Alison Cunningham



FOR the long nights you lay awake  
And watched for my unworthy sake :  
For your most comfortable hand  
That led me through the uneven land :

## Her Infinite Variety

For all the story-books you read :  
For all the pains you comforted :  
For all you pitied, all you bore,  
In sad and happy days of yore :—  
My second Mother, my first Wife,  
The angel of my infant life—  
From the sick child, now well and old,  
Take, nurse, the little book you hold !

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read  
May find as dear a nurse at need,  
And every child who lists my rhyme,  
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,  
May hear it in as kind a voice  
As made my childish days rejoice !

*R. L. Stevenson*

### Mistress Nicely : a Pattern for Housekeepers



(Written after seeing Mrs. Davenport in  
the character, at Covent Garden)

**S**HE was a woman peerless in her station  
With household virtues wedded to her name ;  
Spotless in linen, grass-bleach'd in her fame,  
And pure and clear-starch'd in her conversation ;  
Thence in my Castle of Imagination  
She dwells for evermore, the dainty dame,  
To keep all airy draperies from shame,  
And all dream furnitures in preservation ;  
There walketh she with keys quite silver bright,  
In perfect hose, and shoes of seemly black,  
Apron and stomacher of lily-white,

## Family Friends

And decent order follows in her track :  
The burnish'd plate grows lustrous in her sight,  
And polish'd floors and tables shine her back.

*T. Hood*

Sophy Johnston



AND Sophia, or, as she was always called, Suphy—Johnston, of the Hilton family. There was an original ! Her father, from some whim, resolved to see how it would turn out, and gave her no education whatever. Possessed of great natural vigour of mind, she passed her youth in utter rusticity ; in the course of which however she made herself a good carpenter and a good smith—arts which she practised occasionally, even to the shoeing of a horse, I believe till after the middle of her life. It was not till after she became a woman that she taught herself to read and write ; and then she read incessantly. She must have been about 60 before I ever saw her, which was chiefly, and often, at Niddrie. Her dress was always the same—a man's hat when out of doors, and generally when within them, a cloth covering exactly like a man's great-coat, buttoned closely from the chin to the ground, worsted stockings, strong shoes with large brass clasps. And in this raiment she sat in any drawing-room, and at any table, amidst all the fashion and aristocracy of the land, respected and liked.

For her dispositions were excellent ; her talk intelligent and racy, rich both in old anecdote, and in shrewd modern observation, and spiced with a good deal of plain sarcasm ; her understanding powerful ;

## Her Infinite Variety

all her opinions free, and very freely expressed ; and neither loneliness, nor very slender means, ever brought sourness or melancholy to her face or her heart.

Sitting, with her back to the light, in the usual arm-chair by the side of the fire, in the Niddrie drawing-room, with her great-coat and her hat, her dark wrinkled face, and firmly pursed mouth, the two feet set flat on the floor and close together, so that the public had a full view of the substantial shoes, the book held by the two hands very near the eyes, if the quick ear overheard any presumptuous folly, be it from solemn gentleman or fine lady, down went the volume, up the spectacles—"That's surely great nonsense, Sir," though she had never seen him before ; then, a little Quart and Tierce would begin, and the wight must have been very lucky if it did not end by his being smote.




Her own proper den was in a flat on the ground floor of a house in Windmill Street, where her sole companion was a single female servant. When the servant went out, which she generally took the liberty of doing for the whole of Sunday, Suphy's orders were that she should lock the door and take the key with her. This saved Suphy the torment of always rising ; for people went away when they found the house, as they thought, shut up. But she had a hole through which she saw them perfectly well ; and, if she was inclined, she conversed through this orifice ; and when tired of them told them to go away.

Though enjoying life, neither she nor any of those stout-hearted women had any horror of death. When Suphy's day was visibly approaching, Dr. Gregory prescribed abstinence from animal food, and recommended "spoon meat," unless she wished to die. "Dee,

## Family Friends

Doctor ! odd—I'm thinking they've forgotten an auld wife like me up yonder !" However, when he came back next day, the Doctor found her at the spoon meat—supping a haggis. She was remembered.

*Lord Cockburn*

The Old View      

### I

THE utmost of a woman's character is contained in domestic life ; . . . All she has to do in this world is contained within the duties of a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a mother.

*Sir Richard Steele*

### II

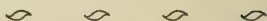
AS our English women excel those of all nations in beauty, they should endeavour to out-shine them in all other accomplishments proper to the sex, and to distinguish themselves as tender mothers and faithful wives, rather than as furious partizans. Female virtues are of a domestic turn. The family is the proper province for private women to shine in.

*Joseph Addison*

## XVIII

### THE ADVENTURERS

Lady Hester Stanhope



THE woman before me had exactly the person of a Prophetess—not, indeed, of the divine Sibyl imagined by Domenichino, so sweetly distracted betwixt Love, and Mystery, but of a good, business-like, practical, Prophetess, long used to the exercise of her sacred calling. I have been told by those who knew Lady Hester Stanhope in her youth, that any notion of a resemblance betwixt her and the great Chatham, must have been fanciful, but at the time of my seeing her, the large commanding features of the gaunt woman, then sixty years old or more, certainly reminded me of the Statesman that lay dying<sup>1</sup> in the House of Lords according to Copley's picture; her face was of the most astonishing whiteness;<sup>2</sup> she wore a very large turban made seemingly of pale cashmere shawls, and so disposed as to conceal the hair; her dress, from the chin down to the point at which it was concealed by the drapery on her lap, was a mass of white linen loosely

<sup>1</sup> Historically "*fainting*"; the death did not occur until long afterwards.

<sup>2</sup> I am told that in youth she was exceedingly sallow.

## The Adventurers

folding—an ecclesiastical sort of affair—more like a surplice than any of those blessed creations which our souls love under the names of “dress,” and “frock,” and “boddice,” and “collar,” and “habit-shirt,” and sweet “chemisette.”







Such was the outward seeming of the personage that sat before me, and indeed she was almost bound by the fame of her actual achievements, as well as by her sublime pretensions, to look a little differently from the rest of woman-kind. There had been something of grandeur in her career: after the death of Lady Chatham, which happened in 1803, she lived under the roof of her uncle, the second Pitt, and when he resumed the Government in 1804, she became the dispenser of much patronage, and sole Secretary of State for the department of Treasury banquets. Not having seen the Lady until late in her life, when she was fired with spiritual ambition, I can hardly fancy that she could have performed her political duties in the saloons of the Minister with much of feminine sweetness and patience; I am told, however, that she managed matters very well indeed; perhaps it was better for the lofty-minded leader of the House to have his reception-rooms guarded by this stately creature, than by a merely clever and managing woman; it was fitting that the wholesome awe with which he filled the minds of the country gentlemen should be aggravated by the presence of his majestic niece. But the end was approaching. The sun of Austerlitz shewed the Czar madly sliding his splendid army like a weaver's shuttle, from his right hand to his left, under the very eyes—the deep, gray, watchful eyes of Napoleon; before night came, the coalition was a vain thing—meet for history, and the heart of its great author, when the terrible tidings came to his ears, was

## Her Infinite Variety

wrung with grief—fatal grief. In the bitterness of his despair, he cried out to his niece, and bid her “ROLL UP THE MAP OF EUROPE”; there was a little more of suffering, and at last, with his swollen tongue (so they say) still muttering something for England, he died by the noblest of all sorrows.

Lady Hester, meeting the calamity in her own fierce way, seems to have scorned the poor island that had not enough of God’s grace to keep the “heaven-sent” Minister alive. I can hardly tell why it should be, but there is a longing for the East very commonly felt by proud people, when goaded by sorrow. Lady Hester Stanhope obeyed this impulse; for some time, I believe, she was at Constantinople, and there her magnificence as well as her near alliance to the late Minister gained her great influence. Afterwards she passed into Syria.

*A. W. Kinglake*

Isopel Berners      

**B**UT other figures were now already upon the scene. Dashing past the other horse and cart, which by this time had reached the bottom of the pass, appeared an exceedingly tall woman, or rather girl, for she could scarcely have been above eighteen; she was dressed in a tight bodice and a blue stuff gown; hat, bonnet, or cap she had none, and her hair, which was flaxen, hung down on her shoulders unconfined; her complexion was fair, and her features handsome, with a determined but open expression. . . .

In the evening of that same day the tall girl and I sat at tea by the fire, at the bottom of the dingle; the girl on a small stool, and myself, as usual, upon my stone.



## The Adventurers

The water which served for the tea had been taken from a spring of pellucid water in the neighbourhood, which I had not had the good fortune to discover, though it was well known to my companion, and to the wandering people who frequented the dingle.

"This tea is very good," said I, "but I cannot enjoy it as much as if I were well: I feel very sadly."

"How else should you feel," said the girl, "after fighting with the Flaming Tinman? All I wonder at is that you can feel at all! As for the tea, it ought to be good, seeing that it cost me ten shillings a pound."

"That's a great deal for a person in your station to pay."

"In my station! I'd have you to know, young man—however, I haven't the heart to quarrel with you, you look so ill; and after all, it is a good sum for one to pay who travels the roads; but if I must have tea, I like to have the best; and tea I must have, for I am used to it, though I can't help thinking that it sometimes fills my head with strange fancies—what some folks call vapours, making me weep and cry."

"Dear me," said I, "I should never have thought that one of your size and fierceness would weep and cry!"

"My size and fierceness! I tell you what, young man, you are not over civil this evening; but you are ill, as I said before, and I shan't take much notice of your language, at least for the present; as for my size, I am not so much bigger than yourself; and as for being fierce, you should be the last one to fling that at me. It is well for you that I can be fierce sometimes. If I hadn't taken your part against Blazing Bosville, you wouldn't be now taking tea with me." . . .

If I am asked how we passed the time when we were

## Her Infinite Variety

together in the dingle, I would answer that we passed the time very tolerably, all things considered ; we conversed together, and when tired of conversing I would sometimes give Belle a lesson in Armenian ; her progress was not particularly brilliant, but upon the whole satisfactory ; in about a fortnight she had hung up one hundred Haikan numerals upon the hake of her memory. I found her conversation highly entertaining ; she had seen much of England and Wales, and had been acquainted with some of the most remarkable characters who travelled the roads at that period ; and let me be permitted to say that many remarkable characters have travelled the roads of England, of whom fame has never said a word. I loved to hear her anecdotes of these people ; some of whom I found had occasionally attempted to lay violent hands either upon her person or effects, and had invariably been humbled by her without the assistance of either justice or constable.

could clearly see, however, that she was rather tired of England, and wished for a change of scene ; she was particularly fond of talking of America, to which country her aspirations chiefly tended. She had heard much of America, which had excited her imagination ; for at that time America was much talked of, on roads and in homesteads—at least, so said Belle, who had good opportunities of knowing—and most people allowed that it was a good country for adventurous English. The people who chiefly spoke against it, as she informed me, were soldiers disbanded upon pensions, the sextons of village churches, and excisemen. Belle had a craving desire to visit that country, and to wander with cart and little animal amongst its forests ; when I would occasionally object that she would be exposed to danger from strange and perverse customers, she said that she had

## The Adventurers

not wandered the roads of England so long and alone, to be afraid of anything which might befall in America ; and that she hoped, with God's favour, to be able to take her own part, and to give to perverse customers as good as they might bring. She had a dauntless heart, that same Belle. Such was the staple of Belle's conversation. As for mine, I would endeavour to entertain her with strange dreams of adventure, in which I figured in opaque forests, strangling wild beasts, or discovering and plundering the hoards of dragons ; and sometimes I would narrate to her other things far more genuine—how I had tamed savage mares, wrestled with Satan, and had dealings with ferocious publishers.

*George Borrow*

## XIX

### THALIA AND MELPOMENE

A Singing-Girl    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

BLUE-EYED Musa, the sweet-voiced nightingale, suddenly this little grave holds voiceless, and she lies like a stone who was so accomplished and so famous ; fair Musa, be this dust light over thee !

*J. W. Mackail (from the Greek Anthology)*

Peg Woffington    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

#### I

MRS. WOFFINGTON is a downright cheat, a triumphant plagiarist. She first steals your heart, and then laughs at you, secure of your applause. There is such a prepossession arises from her form ; such a witchcraft in her beauty, and to those who are personally acquainted with her such an absolute command from the sweetness of her disposition, that it is almost impossible to criticise upon her.

*Anon.*

# Thalia and Melpomene

## II

THO' Peggy's charms have oft been sung,  
The darling theme of ev'ry tongue,  
New praises still remain ;  
Beauty like hers may well infuse  
New flights, new fancies, like a Muse,  
And brighten ev'ry strain

'Tis not her form alone I prize,  
Which ev'ry fool that has but eyes,  
As well as I, can see :  
To say she's fair is but to say,  
When the sun shines at noon, 'tis day,  
Which none need learn of me.

But I'm in love with Peggy's mind,  
Where ev'ry virtue is combin'd  
That can adorn the fair ;  
Excepting one, you scarce can miss,  
So trifling that you would not wish  
That virtue had been there.

She who possesses all the rest  
Must sure excel the prude, whose breast  
That virtue shares alone :  
To seek perfection is a jest ;  
They who have fewest faults are best,  
And Peggy has but one.

*David Garrick*

## Her Infinite Variety

Mrs. Bracegirdle

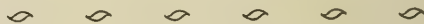


MRS. *BRACEGIRDLE* was now but just blooming to her Maturity ; her Reputation, as an actress, gradually rising with that of her person ; never any Woman was in such general Favour of her Spectators, which, to the last Scene of her Dramatick Life, she maintain'd, by not being unguarded in her private Character.

This Discretion contributed, not a little, to make her the *Cara*, the darling of the theatre. For it will be no extravagant thing to say, Scarce an Audience saw her, that were less than half of them Lovers, without a suspected Favourite among them : and tho' she might be said to have been the Universal Passion, and under the highest Temptations, her Constancy in resisting them, served but to increase the number of her Admirers ; and this perhaps you will more easily believe, when I extend not my encomiums on her Person, beyond a Sincerity that can be suspected ; for she had no greater Claim to Beauty, than what the most desirable *Brunette* might pretend to. But her youth, and lively Aspect, threw out such a Glow of Health, and Chearfulness, that, on the Stage, few Spectators that were not past it, could behold her without Desire. It was even a Fashion among the gay, and young, to have a Taste or *Tendre* for Mrs. *Bracegirdle*.

*Colley Cibber*

Kitty Clive



I

MRS. *CLIVE* in the sprightliness of humour I have never seen equalled. What Clive did best, she did better than Garrick . . . she was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature.

*Dr. Johnson*

# Thalia and Melpomene

## II

CLIVE, Sir, is a good thing to sit by : she always understands what you say.

*Dr. Johnson*

## III

YET from her eccentric disposition, strange, eccentric temper, and frank blunt manner, Mrs. Clive did not always go off with quite so much *éclat* in private as in public life, particularly if she happened to be crossed by that touchstone of temper, gaming. Quadrille was proposed, and all immediately took their stations. I soon observed Mrs. Clive's countenance alternately redden and turn pale. At last her Manille went, and with it the remnants of her temper. Her face was of an universal crimson, and tears of rage seemed ready to start into her eyes. At that very moment, as Satan would have it, her opponent, a dowager, whose hoary head and eyebrows were as white as those of an Albiness, triumphantly and briskly demanded payment for the two black aces. "Two black aces!" answered the enraged loser, in a voice rendered almost unintelligible by passion; "here, take the money, though instead, I wish I could give you *two black eyes, you old white cat!*"

*Frederick Reynolds*

## IV

THE latter part of her life she spent in retirement at Strawberry Hill, where she was a neighbour and friend to Horace Walpole, whose effeminacy she helped to keep on the alert. It always seems to us as if she had been the man of the two and he the woman.







*Leigh Hunt*

# Her Infinite Variety

## V

YOU never saw anything so droll as Mrs. Clive's countenance, between the heat of the summer, the pride in her legacy, and the efforts to appear concerned.

*Horace Walpole*

Mrs. Siddons                        

## I

WE trust that we have too much good sense to attempt painting a picture of Sarah Siddons. In her youth it is said she was beautiful, even lovely, and won men's hearts as *Rosalind*. But beauty is a fading flower; it faded from her face ere one wrinkle had touched that fixed paleness which seldom was tinged with any colour, even in the whirlwind of passion. Light came and went across those finest features at the coming or going of each feeling and thought; but faint was the change of hue ever visible on that glorious marble. It was the magnificent countenance of an animated statue, in the stillness of its idealized beauty instinct with all the emotions of our mortal life. Idealized beauty! Did we not say that beauty had faded from her face? Yes, but it was overspread with a kindred expression, for which we withhold the name only because it seemed more divine, inspiring awe that overpowered while it mingled with delight, more than regal—say rather, immortal. Such an image surely had never before trod, nor ever again will tread, the enchanted floor. In all stateliest shows of waking woe she dwindled the stateliest into insignificance; her majesty made others mean; in her sunlike light all stars “paled their in-



## Thalia and Melpomene

effectual fires." But none knew the troubled grandeur of guilt till they saw her in *Lady Macbeth*, walking in her sleep, and as she wrung her hands, striving in vain to wash from her the engrained murder, "Not all the perfumes of Arabia could sweeten this little hand!" The whisper came as from the hollow grave; and more hideously haunted than ever was the hollow grave, seemed then to be the cell of her heart! Shakspeare's self had learned something then from a sight of Siddons.

*John Wilson*







### II

THE homage she has received is greater than that which is paid to Queens. The enthusiasm she excited had something idolatrous about it; she was regarded less with admiration than with wonder, as if a being of a superior order had dropped from another sphere to awe the world with the majesty of her appearance. She raised Tragedy to the skies, or brought it down from thence. It was something above nature. We can conceive of nothing grander. She embodied to our imagination the fables of mythology, of the heroic and deified mortals of elder time. She was not less than a goddess, or than a prophetess inspired by the gods. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine. She was Tragedy personified. She was the stateliest ornament of the public mind. She was not only the idol of the people, she not only hushed the tumultuous shouts of the pit in breathless expectation, and quenched the blaze of surrounding beauty in silent tears, but to the retired and lonely student, through long years of solitude, her face has shone as if an eye had appeared from heaven; her name has been as if a voice had opened the chambers of the human heart, or as if

## Her Infinite Variety

a trumpet had awakened the sleeping and the dead. To have seen Mrs. Siddons was an event in every one's life.

*W. Hazlitt*

Mrs. Jordan                        

THERE was one comic actress, who was Nature herself in one of her most genial forms. This was Mrs. Jordan ; who, though she was neither beautiful, nor handsome, nor even pretty, nor accomplished, nor “a lady,” nor anything conventional or *comme il faut* whatsoever, yet was so pleasant, so cordial, so natural, so full of spirits, so healthily constituted in mind and body, had such a shapely leg withal, so charming a voice, and such a happy and happy-making expression of countenance, that she appeared something superior to all those requirements of acceptability, and to hold a patent from Nature herself for our delight and good opinion. It is creditable to the feelings of society in general, that allowances are made for the temptations to which the stage exposes the sex ; and in Mrs. Jordan's case these were not diminished by a sense of the like consideration due to princely restrictions, and to the manifest domestic dispositions of more parties than one. But she made even Methodists love her. . . . Mrs. Jordan was inimitable in exemplifying the consequences of too much restraint in ill-educated Country Girls, in Romps, in Hoydens, and in Wards on whom the mercenary have designs. She wore a bib and tucker and pinafore, with a bouncing propriety, fit to make the boldest spectator alarmed at the idea of bringing such a household responsibility on his shoulders. To see her when thus attired shed blubbing tears for some disappointment,

## Thalia and Melpomene

and eat all the while a great thick slice of bread and butter, weeping, and moaning, and munching, and eyeing at every bite the part she meant to bite next, was a lesson against will and appetite worth a hundred sermons of our friends on board the hoy ; and, on the other hand, they could assuredly have done and said nothing at all calculated to make such an impression in favour of amiableness as she did, when she acted in gentle, generous, and confiding characters. The way in which she would take a friend by the cheek and kiss her, or make up a quarrel with a lover, or coax a guardian into good-humour, or sing (without accompaniment) the song of "Since then I'm doom'd," or "In the dead of the night," trusting, as she had a right to do, and as the house wished her to do, to the sole effect of her sweet, mellow, and loving voice—the reader will pardon me, but tears of pleasure and regret come into my eyes at the recollection, as if she personified whatsoever was happy at that period of life, and which has gone like herself. The very sound of the little familiar word *bud* from her lips (the abbreviation of husband), as she packed it closer, as it were, in the utterance, and pouted it up with fondness in the man's face, taking him at the same time by the chin, was a whole concentrated world of the power of loving.

*Leigh Hunt*

Mrs. Sheridan    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

### I

HER exquisite and delicate loveliness, all the more fascinating for the tender sadness which seemed, as a contemporary describes it, to project over her the

## Her Infinite Variety

shadow of early death, her sweet voice, and the pathetic expression of her singing, the timid and touching grace of her air and deportment, had won universal admiration for Eliza Ann Linley. From the days when, a girl of nine, she stood with her little basket at the pump-room door, timidly offering the tickets for her father's benefit concerts, to those when, in her teens, she was the belle of the Bath assemblies, none could resist her beseeching grace.

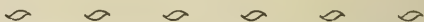
*C. R. Leslie*

### II

THERE has seldom perhaps existed a finer combination of all those qualities that attract both eye and heart than this accomplished and lovely person exhibited. To judge by what we hear, it was impossible to see her without admiration, or know her without love ; and a late Bishop used to say that "she seemed to him the connecting link between woman and angel." The devotedness of affection, too, with which she was regarded, not only by her own father and sisters, but by all her husband's family, showed that her fascination was of that best kind which, like charity, "begins at home," and that while her beauty and music enchanted the world, she had charms more intrinsic and lasting for those who came nearer to her.

*Thomas Moore*

Malibran



MADAME MALIBRAN was always an object of the greatest interest to me, not only on account of her extraordinary genius, and great and various gifts, but because of the many details I heard of her youth from M. de la Forest, the French Consul in

## Thalia and Melpomene

New York, who knew her as Marie Garcia, and a wild and wayward but most wonderful girl, under her father's most tyrannical and harsh rule during the time they spent in the United States. He said that there was not a piece of furniture in their apartment that had not been thrown at his daughter's head, in the course of the moral and artistic training he bestowed upon her. It is perhaps wonderful that success in either direction should have been the result of such a system ; but, upon the whole, the singer seems to have profited more than the woman from it, as might have been expected. Garcia was an incomparable artist, actor, and singer (no such Don Giovanni has ever been seen or heard since), and bestowed upon all his children the finest musical education that ever made great natural gifts available to the utmost to their possessors. I suppose it was from him, too, that Marie derived with her Spanish blood the vehement, uncontrollable nature of which M. de la Forest told me he had witnessed such extraordinary exhibitions in her girlhood. He said she would fly into a passion of rage, in which she would set her teeth in the sleeve of her silk gown, and tear and rend great pieces out of the thick texture as if it were muslin ; a test of the strength of those beautiful teeth, as well as of the fury of her passion. She then would fall rigid on the floor, without motion, breath, pulse, or colour, though not fainting, in a sort of catalepsy of rage.

Her marriage with the old French merchant Malibran was speedily followed by their separation ; he went to France, leaving his divine devil of a wife in New York, and during his absence she used to write letters to him, which she frequently showed to M. de la Forest, who was her intimate friend and adviser, and took a paternal interest in her affairs.

## Her Infinite Variety

These epistles often expressed so much cordial kindness and warmth of feeling towards her husband, that M. de la Forest, who knew her separation from him to have been entirely her own act and choice, and any decent agreement and harmonious life between them absolutely impossible, was completely puzzled by such professions towards a man with whom she was determined never to live, and occasionally said to her, "What do you mean? Do you wish your husband to come here to you? or do you contemplate going to him? In short, what is your intention in writing with all this affection to a man from whom you have separated yourself?"

Upon this view of her epistle, which did not appear to have struck her, M. de la Forest said, she would (instead of rewriting it) tack on to it, with the most ludicrous inconsistency, a sort of revocatory codicil, in the shape of a postscript, expressing her decided desire that her husband should remain where he was, and her own explicit determination never again to enter into any more intimate relations with him than were compatible with a correspondence from opposite sides of the Atlantic, whatever personal regard or affection for him her letter might appear to express to the contrary notwithstanding.

To my great regret, I saw her only once act, though I heard her sing at concerts and in private repeatedly. My only personal encounter with her took place in a curious fashion. My father and myself were acting at Manchester, and had just finished performing the parts of Mr. and Mrs. Beverley, one night, in "The Gamester." On returning from the theatre, as I was slowly and in considerable exhaustion following my father up the hotel stairs, as we reached the landing by our sitting-room, a

## Thalia and Melpomene

door immediately opposite to it flew open, and a lady dressed all in white muslin, rushed out of it, and fell hysterically: "Oh, Mr. Kembel, my deare, deare Mr. Kembel!" This was Madame Malibran, under the effect of my father's performance of the Gamester, which she had just witnessed. "Come, come," quoth my father (who was old enough to have been her's, and knew her very well), patting her consolingly on the back, "Come now, my dear Madame Malibran, now, Marie, don't, my child!" all which was taking place on the public staircase while I looked on in wide-eyed amazement behind.

*Fanny Kemble*

Rachel    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

### I

EVERYBODY here is now raving about her. I have only seen her once on the stage, and heard her declaim at Stafford House, the morning of the concert for the Poles. Her appearance is very striking: she is of a very good height; too thin for beauty, but not for dignity or grace; her want of chest and breadth indeed almost suggest a tendency to pulmonary disease, coupled with her pallor and her youth (she is only just twenty). Her voice is the most remarkable of her natural qualifications for her vocation, being the deepest and most sonorous voice I ever heard from a woman's lips: it wants brilliancy, variety, and tenderness; but it is like a fine deep-toned bell, and expresses admirably the passions in the delineation of which she excels—scorn, hatred, revenge, vitriolic irony, concentrated rage, seething jealousy, and a fierce love which seems in its excess



## Her Infinite Variety

allied to all the evil which sometimes springs from that bitter-sweet root.

I shall never forget the first time I ever heard Mademoiselle Rachel speak. I was acting my old part of Julia, in "The Hunchback," at Lady Ellesmere's, where the play was got up for an audience of her friends, and for her special gratification. The room was darkened, with the exception of our stage, and I had no means of discriminating anybody among my audience, which was, as became an assembly of such distinguished persons, decorously quiet and undemonstrative. But in one of the scenes, where the foolish heroine, in the midst of her vulgar triumph at the Earl of Rochedale's proposal, is suddenly overcome by the remorseful recollection of her love for Clifford, and almost lets the Earl's letter fall from her trembling hands, I heard a voice out of the darkness, and it appeared to me almost close to my feet, exclaiming, in a tone the vibrating depth of which I shall never forget, "*Ah, bien, très bien !*"

Mademoiselle Rachel's face is very expressive and dramatically fine, though not absolutely beautiful. It is a long oval, with a head of classical and very graceful contour ; the forehead rather narrow and not very high ; the eyes small, dark, deep-set, and terribly powerful ; the brow straight, noble, and fine in form, though not very flexible.

*Fanny Kemble*

### II

I N Paris all look'd hot and like to fade.

Sere, in the garden of the Tuileries,  
Sere with September, droop'd the chestnut-trees.

'Twas dawn ; a brougham roll'd through the streets and  
made



## Thalia and Melpomene

Halt at the white and silent colonnade  
Of the French Theatre. Worn with disease,  
Rachel, with eyes no gazing can appease,  
Sate in the brougham and those blank walls survey'd.

She follows the gay world, whose swarms have fled  
To Switzerland, to Baden, to the Rhine ;  
Why stops she by this empty playhouse drear ?

Ah, where the spirit its highest life hath led,  
All spots, match'd with that spot, are less divine ;  
And Rachel's Switzerland, her Rhine, is here !

Unto a lonely villa, in a dell  
Above the fragrant warm Provençal shore,  
The dying Rachel in a chair they bore  
Up the steep pine-plumed paths of the Estrelle,

And laid her in a stately room, where fell  
The shadow of a marble Muse of yore,  
The rose-crown'd queen of legendary lore,  
Polymnia, full on her death-bed.—'Twas well !

The fret and misery of our northern towns,  
In this her life's last day, our poor, our pain,  
Our jangle of false wits, our climate's frowns,

Do for this radiant Greek-soul'd artist cease ;  
Sole object of her dying eyes remain  
The beauty and the glorious art of Greece.

Sprung from the blood of Israel's scatter'd race,  
At a mean inn in German Aarau born,  
To forms from antique Greece and Rome upturn,  
Trick'd out with a Parisian speech and face,

## Her Infinite Variety

Imparting life renew'd, old classic grace,  
Then, soothing with thy Christian strain forlorn,  
A-Kempis ! her departing soul outworn,  
While by her bedside Hebrew rites have place—







Ah, not the radiant spirit of Greece alone  
She had—one power, which made her breast its home !  
In her, like us, there clash'd, contending powers,

Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome.  
The strife ; the mixture in her soul, are ours ;  
Her genius and her glory are her own.

*Matthew Arnold*

## XX

### ADDISON AND STEELE'S GALLERY

Leonora                                    

SOME Months ago, my Friend Sir ROGER, being in the Country, enclosed a Letter to me, directed to a certain Lady whom I shall here call by the Name of *Leonora*, and as it contained Matters of Consequence, desired me to deliver it to her with my own Hand. Accordingly I waited upon her Ladyship pretty early in the Morning, and was desired by her Woman to walk into her Lady's Library, till such time as she was in a Readiness to receive me. The very Sound of a *Lady's Library* gave me a great Curiosity to see it ; and as it was some time before the Lady came to me, I had an Opportunity of turning over a great many of her Books, which were ranged together in a very beautiful Order. At the End of the *Folios* (which were finely bound and gilt) were great Jars of *China* placed one above another in a very noble Piece of Architecture. The *Quartos* were separated from the *Octavos* by a Pile of smaller Vessels, which rose in a delightful Pyramid. The *Octavos* were bounded by Tea Dishes of all Shapes, Colours and Sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden Frame, that they looked like one continued Pillar indented with the finest Strokes of

## Her Infinite Variety

Sculpture, and stained with the greatest Variety of Dyes. That Part of the Library which was designed for the Reception of Plays and Pamphlets, and other loose Papers, was enclosed in a kind of Square, consisting of one of the prettiest Grotesque Works that ever I saw, and made up of Scaramouches, Lions, Monkeys, Mandarin,es, Trees, Shells, and a thousand other odd Figures in *China* Ware. In the midst of the Room was a little Japan Table, with a Quire of gilt Paper upon it, and on the Paper a Silver Snuff-box made in the Shape of a little Book. I found there were several other Counterfeit Books upon the upper Shelves, which were carved in Wood, and served only to fill up the Number, like Fagots in the muster of a Regiment. I was wonderfully pleased with such a mixt kind of Furniture, as seemed very suitable both to the Lady and the Scholar, and did not know at first whether I should fancy my self in a Grotto, or in a Library.

Upon my looking into the Books, I found there were some few which the Lady had bought for her own use, but that most of them had been got together, either because she had heard them praised, or because she had seen the Authors of them. Among several that I examin'd, I very well remember these that follow.

*Ogleby's Virgil.*

*Dryden's Juvenal.*

*Cassandra.*

*Cleopatra.*

*Astræa.*

*Sir Isaac Newton's Works.*

The *Grand Cyrus*: With a Pin stuck in one of the middle Leaves.

*Pembroke's Arcadia.*

## Addison and Steele's Gallery

*Locke* of Human Understanding : With a Paper of Patches in it.

A Spelling-Book.

A Dictionary for the Explanation of hard Words.

*Sherlock* upon Death.

The fifteen Comforts of Matrimony.

Sir *William Temple's* Essays.

Father *Malbranche's* Search after Truth, translated into *English*.

A Book of Novels.

The Academy of Compliments.

*Culpepper's* Midwifry.

The Ladies' Calling.

Tales in Verse by Mr. *Durfey* : Bound in Red Leather, gilt on the Back, and doubled down in several Places.

All the Classick Authors in Wood.

A set of *Elzevers* by the same Hand.

*Clelia* : Which opened of it self in the Place that describes two Lovers in a Bower.

*Baker's* Chronicle.

Advice to a Daughter.

The New *Atalantis*, with a Key to it.

Mr. *Steel's* Christian Heroe.

A Prayer Book : With a Bottle of *Hungary* Water by the side of it.

Dr. *Sacheverell's* Speech.

*Fielding's* Tryal.

*Seneca's* Morals.

*Taylor's* holy Living and Dying.

*La Ferte's* Instructions for Country Dances.

*Leonora* was formerly a celebrated Beauty, and is still a very lovely Woman. She has been a Widow for two

## Her Infinite Variety

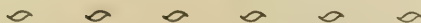
or three Years, and being unfortunate in her first Marriage, has taken a Resolution never to venture upon a second. She has no Children to take care of, and leaves the Management of her Estate to my good Friend Sir ROGER. But as the Mind naturally sinks into a kind of Lethargy, and falls asleep, that is not agitated by some Favourite Pleasures and Pursuits, *Leonora* has turned all the Passions of her Sex into a Love of Books and Retirement. She converses chiefly with Men (as she has often said herself), but it is only in their Writings ; and admits of very few Male-Visitants, except my Friend Sir ROGER, whom she hears with great Pleasure, and without Scandal. As her Reading has lain very much among Romances, it has given her a very particular Turn of Thinking, and discovers it self even in her House, her Gardens, and her Furniture. Sir ROGER has entertained me an Hour together with a Description of her Country-Seat, which is situated in a kind of Wilderness, about an hundred Miles distant from *London*, and looks like a little Enchanted Palace. The Rocks about her are shaped into Artificial Grottoes covered with Wood-Bines and Jessamines. The Woods are cut into shady Walks, twisted into Bowers, and filled with Cages of Turtles. The Springs are made to run among Pebbles, and by that means taught to Murmur very agreeably. They are likewise collected into a Beautiful Lake, that is Inhabited by a Couple of Swans, and empties it self by a little Rivulet which runs through a Green Meadow, and is known in the Family by the Name of *The Purling Stream*. The Knight likewise tells me, that this Lady preserves her Game better than any of the Gentlemen in the Country, not (says Sir ROGER) that she sets so great a Value upon her Partridges and Pheasants, as upon her Larks and Nightingales. For she says that

## Addison and Steele's Gallery

every Bird which is killed in her Ground, will spoil a Consort, and that she shall certainly miss him the next Year.

*Joseph Addison*

Clarinda



*DEAR Mr. SPECTATOR*,—You having set your Readers an Exercise in one of your last Week's Papers, I have perform'd mine according to your Orders, and herewith send it you enclosed. You must know, *Mr. SPECTATOR*, that I am a Maiden Lady of a good Fortune, who have had several Matches offered me for these ten Years last past, and have at present warm Applications made to me by a very pretty Fellow. As I am at my own Disposal, I come up to Town every Winter, and pass my Time in it after the manner you will find in the following Journal, which I begun to write upon the very Day after your *Spectator* upon that Subject.

*TUESDAY Night.* Could not go to sleep till one in the Morning for thinking of my Journal.

*WEDNESDAY. From Eight till Ten,* Drank two Dishes of Chocolate in Bed, and fell asleep after 'em.

*From Ten to Eleven.* Eat a Slice of Bread and Butter, drank a Dish of Bohea, read the *Spectator*.

*From Eleven to One.* At my Toilet, try'd a new Head. Gave Orders for *Veny* to be combed and washed. *Mem.* I look best in Blue.

*From One till Half an Hour after Two.* Drove to the 'Change. Cheap'd a Couple of Fans.

## Her Infinite Variety

*Till Four.* At Dinner. *Mem.* Mr. *Froth* passed by in his new Liveries.

*From Four to Six.* Dressed, paid a Visit to old Lady *Blithe* and her Sister, having before heard they were gone out of Town that Day.

*From Six to Eleven.* At Basset. *Mem.* Never set again upon the Ace of Diamonds.

THURSDAY. *From Eleven at Night to Eight in the Morning.* Dream'd that I punted to Mr. *Froth*.

*From Eight to Ten.* Chocolate. Read two Acts in *Aurenzebe* abed.

*From Ten to Eleven.* Tea-Table. Sent to borrow Lady *Faddle's Cupid* for *Veny*. Read the Play-Bills. Received a Letter from Mr. *Froth*. *Mem.* Locked it up in my strong Box.

*Rest of the Morning.* *Fontange*, the Tirewoman, her Account of my Lady *Blithe's* Wash. Broke a Tooth in my little Tortoise-shell Comb. Sent *Frank* to know how my Lady *Hectick* rested after her Monky's leaping out at Window. Looked pale. *Fontange* tells me my Glass is not true. Dressed by Three.

*From Three to Four.* Dinner cold before I sat down.

*From Four to Eleven.* Saw Company. Mr. *Froth's* Opinion of *Milton*. His Account of the *Mohocks*. His Fancy for a Pin-cushion. Picture in the Lid of his Snuff-box. Old Lady *Faddle* promises me her Woman to cut my Hair. Lost five Guineas at Crimp.

*Twelve a-Clock at Night.* Went to Bed.

FRIDAY. *Eight in the Morning.* Abed. Read over all Mr. *Froth's* Letters. *Cupid* and *Veny*.

*Ten a-Clock.* Stay'd within all day, not at home.



## Addison and Steele's Gallery

*From Ten to Twelve.* In Conference with my Mantua-Maker. Sorted a Suit of Ribbands. Broke my Blue China Cup.

*From Twelve to One.* Shut my self up in my Chamber, practised Lady *Betty Modely's* Skuttle.

*One in the Afternoon.* Called for my flowered Handkerchief. Worked half a Violet-Leaf in it. Eyes aked and Head out of Order. Threw by my Work, and read over the remaining Part of *Aurenzebe*.

*From Three to Four.* Dined.

*From Four to Twelve.* Changed my Mind, dressed, went abroad, and play'd at Crimp till Midnight. Found Mrs. *Spitely* at home. Conversation: Mrs. *Brilliant's* Necklace false Stones. Old Lady *Loveday* going to be married to a young Fellow that is not worth a Groat. Miss *Prue* gone into the Country. *Tom Townley* has red Hair. *Mem.* Mrs. *Spitely* whispered in my Ear that she had something to tell me about Mr. *Froth*; I am sure it is not true.

*Between Twelve and One.* Dreamed that Mr. *Froth* lay at my Feet, and called me *Indamora*.

SATURDAY. Rose at Eight a-Clock in the Morning. Sate down to my Toilet.

*From Eight to Nine.* Shifted a Patch for Half an Hour before I could determine it. Fixed it above my left Eye-brow.

*From Nine to Twelve.* Drank my Tea, and dressed.

*From Twelve to Two.* At Chappel. A great deal of good Company. *Mem.* The third Air in the new Opera. Lady *Blithe* dressed frightfully.

*From Three to Four.* Dined. Miss *Kitty* called upon me to go to the Opera before I was risen from Table.

## Her Infinite Variety

*From Dinner to Six.* Drank Tea. Turned off a Footman for being rude to *Veny*.

*Six a-Clock.* Went to the Opera. I did not see Mr. *Froth* till the beginning of the second Act. Mr. *Froth* talked to a Gentleman in a black Wig. Bowed to a Lady in the front Box. Mr. *Froth* and his Friend clapp'd *Nicolini* in the third Act. Mr. *Froth* cried out *Ancora*. Mr. *Froth* led me to my Chair. I think he squeezed my Hand.

*Eleven at Night.* Went to Bed. Melancholy Dreams. Methought *Nicolini* said he was Mr. *Froth*.

SUNDAY. Indisposed.

MONDAY. *Eight a-Clock.* Waked by Miss *Kitty*. *Aurenzebe* lay upon the Chair by me. *Kitty* repeated without Book the Eight best Lines in the Play. Went in our Mobbs to the dumb Man, according to Appointment. Told me that my Lover's Name began with a *G*. *Mem.* The Conjurer was within a Letter of Mr. *Froth's* Name, *etc.*—*Your humble Servant,*

CLARINDA.

To resume one of the Morals of my first Paper, and to confirm *Clarinda* in her good Inclinations, I would have her consider what a pretty Figure she would make among Posterity, were the History of her whole Life published like these five Days of it. I shall conclude my Paper with an Epitaph written by an uncertain Author on Sir *Philip Sidney's* Sister, a Lady who seems to have been of a Temper very much different from that of *Clarinda*. The last Thought of it is so very noble, that I dare say my Reader will pardon me the Quotation.

## Addison and Steele's Gallery

On the Countess Dowager of *Pembroke*

*Underneath this Marble Hearse  
Lies the Subject of all Verse,  
Sidney's Sister, Pembroke's Mother :  
Death, ere thou hast kill'd another,  
Fair, and learn'd, and good as she,  
Time shall throw a Dart at thee.*

*Joseph Addison*

Mrs. Truelove ♪   ♪   ♪   ♪   ♪   ♪

THERE is one Consideration which I would earnestly recommend to all my Female Readers, and which, I hope, will have some weight with them. In short, it is this, that there is nothing so bad for the Face as Party-Zeal. It gives an ill-natured Cast to the Eye, and a disagreeable Sourness to the Look ; besides, that it makes the Lines too strong, and flushes them worse than Brandy. I have seen a Woman's Face break out in Heats, as she has been talking against a great Lord, whom she had never seen in her Life ; and indeed never knew a Party-Woman that kept her Beauty for a Twelve-month. I would therefore advise all my Female Readers, as they value their Complexions, to let alone all Disputes of this Nature : though, at the same time, I would give free Liberty to all superannuated motherly Partizans to be as violent as they please, since there will be no Danger either of their spoiling their Faces, or of their gaining Converts.

For my own part, I think a Man makes an odious and despicable Figure, that is violent in a Party : but a Woman is too sincere to mitigate the Fury of her Principles with Temper and Discretion, and to act

## Her Infinite Variety

with that Caution and Reservedness which are requisite in our Sex. When this unnatural Zeal gets into them, it throws them into ten thousand Heats and Extravagancies ; their generous [Souls] set no Bounds to their Love or to their Hatred ; and whether a Whig or Tory, a Lap-Dog or a Gallant, an Opera or a Puppet-Show, be the Object of it, the Passion, while it reigns, engrosses the whole Woman.

I remember when Dr. *Titus Oates* was in all his Glory, I accompanied my Friend WILL. [HONEYCOMB] in a Visit to a Lady of his Acquaintance : We were no sooner sat down, but upon casting my Eyes about the Room, I found in almost every Corner of it a Print that represented the Doctor in all Magnitudes and Dimensions. A little after, as the Lady was discoursing my Friend, and held her Snuff-box in her Hand, who should I see in the Lid of it but the Doctor. It was not long after this, when she had Occasion for her Handkerchief, which upon the first opening discovered among the Plaits of it the Figure of the Doctor. Upon this my Friend WILL., who loves Raillery, told her, That if he was in Mr. *Truelove's* Place (for that was the Name for her Husband) she should be made as uneasy by a Handkerchief as ever *Othello* was. *I am afraid*, said she, Mr. [HONEYCOMB,] *you are a Tory ; tell me truly, are you a Friend to the Doctor or not ?* WILL., instead of making her a Reply, smiled in her Face (for indeed she was very pretty) and told her that one of her Patches was dropping off. She immediately adjusted it, and looking a little seriously, *Well*, says she, *I'll be hang'd if you and your silent Friend there are not against the Doctor in your Hearts, I suspected as much by his saying nothing*. Upon this she took her Fan into her Hand, and upon the opening of it again displayed to us

## Addison and Steele's Gallery

the Figure of the Doctor, who was placed with great Gravity among the Sticks of it. In a word, I found that the Doctor had taken Possession of her Thoughts, her Discourse, and most of her Furniture ; but finding myself pressed too close by her Question, I winked upon my Friend to take his Leave, which he did accordingly.

*Joseph Addison*

Liddy    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THE cheerful good-humoured Creatures, into whose Heads it never entred that they could make any Man unhappy, are the Persons formed for making Men happy. There's Miss *Liddy* can dance a Jigg, raise Paste, write a good Hand, keep an Account, give a reasonable Answer, and do as she is bid ; while her elder Sister Madam *Martha* is out of Humour, has the Spleen, learns by Reports of People of higher Quality new Ways of being uneasie and displeased. And this happens for no Reason in the World, but that poor *Liddy* knows she has no such thing as a certain Negligence *that is so becoming*, that there is not I know not what in *her Air* : And that if she talks like a Fool, there is no one will say, Well ! I know not what it is, but *every Thing pleases when she speaks it*.

*Sir R. Steele*

The Perverse Widow    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

I

IT is, quoth the good Old Man, looking round him with a Smile, very hard, that any Part of my Land should be settled upon one who has used me so ill as

## Her Infinite Variety

the perverse Widow did ; and yet I am sure I could not see a Sprig of any Bough of this whole Walk of Trees, but I should reflect upon her and her Severity. She has certainly the finest Hand of any Woman in the World. You are to know this was the Place wherein I used to muse upon her ; and by that Custom I can never come into it, but the same tender Sentiments revive in my Mind, as if I had actually walked with that Beautiful Creature under these Shades. I have been Fool enough to carve her Name on the Bark of several of these Trees ; so unhappy is the Condition of Men in Love, to attempt the removing of their Passion by the Methods which serve only to imprint it deeper. She has certainly the finest Hand of any Woman in the World. . . .

You must understand, Sir, this perverse Woman is one of those unaccountable Creatures, that secretly rejoice in the Admiration of Men, but indulge themselves in no further Consequences. Hence it is that she has ever had a Train of Admirers, and she removes from her Slaves in Town to those in the Country, according to the Seasons of the Year. She is a reading Lady, and far gone in the Pleasures of Friendship ; She is always accompanied by a Confident, who is Witness to her daily Protestations against our Sex, and consequently a Bar to her first Steps towards Love, upon the Strength of her own Maxims and Declarations.

However, I must needs say this accomplished Mistress of mine has distinguished me above the rest, and has been known to declare Sir ROGER DE COVERLEY was the Tamest and most Human of all the Brutes in the Country. I was told she said so, by one who thought he rallied me ; but upon the Strength of this slender Encouragement, of being thought least detestable, I

## Addison and Steele's Gallery

made new Liveries, new paired my Coach-Horses, sent them all to Town to be bitted, and taught to throw their Legs well, and move all together, before I pretended to cross the Country and wait upon her. As soon as I thought my Retinue suitable to the Character of my Fortune and Youth, I set out from hence to make my Addresses. The particular Skill of this Lady has ever been to inflame your Wishes, and yet command Respect. To make her Mistress of this Art, she has a greater Share of Knowledge, Wit, and good Sense, than is usual even among Men of Merit. Then she is beautiful beyond the Race of Women. If you won't let her go on with a certain Artifice with her Eyes, and the Skill of Beauty, she will arm her self with her real Charms, and strike you with Admiration instead of Desire. It is certain that if you were to behold the whole Woman, there is that Dignity in her Aspect, that Composure in her Motion, that Complacency in her Manner, that if her Form makes you hope, her Merit makes you fear. But then again, she is such a desperate Scholar, that no Country-Gentleman can approach her without being a Jest. As I was going to tell you, when I came to her House I was admitted to her Presence with great Civility; at the same time she placed her self to be first seen by me in such an Attitude, as I think you call the Posture of a Picture, that she discovered new Charms, and I at last came towards her with such an Awe as made me Speechless. This she no sooner observed but she made her Advantage of it, and began a Discourse to me concerning Love and Honour, as they both are followed by Pretenders, and the real Votaries to them. When she [had] discussed these Points in a Discourse, which I verily believe was as learned as the best Philosopher in *Europe*



## Her Infinite Variety

could possibly make, she asked me whether she was so happy as to fall in with my Sentiments on these important Particulars. Her Confident sat by her, and upon my being in the last Confusion and Silence, this malicious Aid of hers, turning to her, says, I am very glad to observe Sir ROGER pauses upon this Subject, and seems resolved to deliver all his Sentiments upon the Matter when he pleases to speak. They both kept their Countenances, and after I had sat half an Hour meditating how to behave before such profound Casuists, I rose up and took my Leave. Chance has since that time thrown me very often in her Way, and she as often has directed a Discourse to me which I do not understand. This Barbarity has kept me ever at a Distance from the most beautiful Object my Eyes ever beheld. It is thus also she deals with all Mankind, and you must make Love to her, as you would conquer the Sphinx, by posing her. But were she like other Women, and that there were any talking to her, how constant must the Pleasure of that Man be, who could converse with a Creature. But, after all, you may be sure her Heart is fixed on some one or other; and yet I have been credibly inform'd; but who can believe half that is said! After she had done speaking to me, she put her Hand to her Bosom, and adjusted her Tucker. Then she cast her Eyes a little down, upon my beholding her too earnestly. They say she sings excellently: her Voice in her ordinary Speech has something in it inexpressibly sweet. You must know I dined with her at a publick Table the Day after I first saw her, and she helped me to some Tansy in the Eye of all the Gentlemen in the Country: She has certainly the finest Hand of any Woman in the World. I can assure you, Sir, were you to behold her, you would be in the same Condition; for



## Addison and Steele's Gallery

as her Speech is Musick, her Form is Angelick. But I find I grow irregular while I am talking of her : but indeed it would be Stupidity to be unconcerned at such Perfection. Oh the excellent Creature, she is as inimitable to all Women, as she is inaccessible to all Men.

*Sir R. Steele*

### II

I REMEMBER my Friend Sir ROGER, who I dare say never read this Passage in *Plato*, told me some time since, that upon his courting the Perverse Widow (of whom I have given an Account in former Papers) he had disposed of an hundred Acres in a Diamond-Ring, which he would have presented her with, had she thought fit to accept it ; and that upon her Wedding-Day she should have carried on her Head fifty of the tallest Oaks upon his Estate. He further informed me that he would have given her a Cole-pit to keep her in clean Linnen, that he would have allowed her the Profits of a Windmill for her Fans, and have presented her once in three Years with the Sheering of his Sheep [for her] Under-Petticoats. To which the Knight always adds, that though he did not care for fine Cloaths himself, there should not have been a Woman in the Country better dressed than my Lady *Coverley*.

*Joseph Addison*

## XXI

### DIANAS

Juliana Berners



JULIANA BARNES was born *ex antiquâ & illustri domo*. Understand it not in the sense wherein the same was said of a certain Pope, born in a *ruinous cottage*, where the Sun did shine through the *rotten walls* and *roof* thereof. But indeed she was descended of a *respective* Family, though I, not able to find the place, am fain to use my *marginal mark* of *greatest uncertainty*.

She was the *Diana* of her Age for *Hunting* and *Hawking*; skilful also in *Fishing*, and wrote *Three Books* of these Exercises, commending the practice thereof to the *Gentry* of *England*.

The City of Leyden is cited in the very *bottom* of the Low-Countries; so that the water settled there would be soon subject to putrefaction, were it not by *engins* forced up, that it might *fall*, and so by constant *motion* kept from *corruption*. *Idleness* will betray *noble men's minds* to the same mischief, if some ingenious industry be not used for their employment.

Our Juliana also wrot a book of Heraldry. Say not the *Needle* is the most proper *Pen* for the *Woman*; and

## Dianas

that she ought to meddle with making no *Coats*, save such as *Dorcas made for the Widows*, seeing their *Sex* may be not only pardoned, but praised for such lawful diversions. No Gentleman will severely censure the faults in her Heraldry.

*Thomas Fuller*

Mrs. Careless    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THESE hills, too, require good horsemanship. There are none who ride them in better style than the sons of the South Down farmers, though I knew a lady of the name of Careless, that fifteen years ago was wont to accompany to the field Mr. T. H. Harben, of Corsica Hall, Seaford, who was equal to the best of them. Good God, what a treat it was to see her! What, Mr. Editor, is so enchantingly, so heavenly divine, as to behold an elegant well-mounted woman, clever at the manège, in the chase! She is, Sir, the life—the soul—the vigour of men, dogs, horses, and everything that composes the field.

*An Old South Downer*

(*In the "Sporting Magazine," 1823*)

Mrs. Dalzell    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

ON my arrival at Burnside, I was kindly welcomed by Mrs. Dalzell, whose acquaintance I was delighted to make, not only as the sister of Sir Ralph Anstruther, but also from having been told that she was as fond of fox-hunting as her husband is, and one of the best and boldest horsewomen in Scotland. Now as there is nothing like producing proof, and making matters

## Her Infinite Variety

clear as we proceed, I will at once substantiate what I have asserted as to the enthusiasm of the husband, and the fine horsemanship of the wife. "You have a good *garden* here, no doubt," said I one day at dinner at Burnside, to the former, when discussing the merits of some very fine seakale. "*I believe there is,*" was the reply; "but to tell you the truth, I have never been in it. *It is too far from the kennel.*"

Mark, reader, this "too far" is somewhere about one hundred yards! But neither Millwood nor Margery, Racer nor Roundelay, Gilder nor Gadfly, were to be seen there, and anything appertaining to the cabbage genus would have proved a poor substitute for them. The accomplishments of the lady,—“a second Minerva in her studies, another Diana in the field”—are told in a few words. During a visit I paid to this sporting couple last winter, at their new residence in Hertfordshire, I found she had so distinguished herself in a run, *which very few saw the end of*, that the fame of her horse reached the ears of the present Duke of Beaufort; and his Grace having ascertained his price, sent a servant with a cheque for 250 gs. for him on the day previously to my arrival. He is called Tom Thumb; is upwards of sixteen hands high; goes in a plain snaffle bridle, and as light in hand as a pony. I rode him twice during my visit to Scotland, and therefore can vouch for what I have said.

By the bye, I must add one word more to the credit of this lady as a horsewoman; but if I were to relate all her feats, and the number of miles she has ridden to and from hounds, and with hounds, in one day, I should require second wind. Mr. Dalyell told me that towards the end of the capital run I have alluded to, when (as

## Dianas

the Duke of Orleans said to me) "the field had become select," he rode over a style at which the ground at the rising side was very rotten and bad. On looking back to see how his lady managed it, he saw Tom Thumb—who slipped, for timber-jumping is not his forte—on his head on the landing side, having broken every bar. And where was his lady? *à la* Snob in the mud? Not a bit of it; she was in her saddle, and rose, *à la* Musters, with her horse.

*Nimrod*

Varia    ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪       ♪

BETWEEN the yes and no of a woman I would not undertake to thrust the point of a pin.

*Sancho Panza*

A MAN cannot possess anything that is better than a good woman, nor anything that is worse than a bad one.

*Simonides*

ONE should always make it a rule to give up to them, and then they are sure to give up to us.

*Lord Eskdale in "Coningsby"*

WOMAN alone can organise a drawing-room: man succeeds sometimes in a library.

*B. Disraeli*

"HOWEVER, I'm not denyin' the women are foolish: God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

*Mrs. Poyser*

## XXII

### THE PARAGONS

The Lady Margaret Ley      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

DAUGHTER to that good earl, once President  
Of England's council and her treasury,  
Who lived in both, unstain'd with gold or fee,  
And left them both, more in himself content,  
Till the sad breaking of that parliament  
Broke him, as that dishonest victory  
At Chaeronea, fatal to liberty,  
Kill'd with report that old man eloquent ;—  
Though later born than to have known the days  
Wherein your father flourish'd, yet by you,  
Madam, methinks I see him living yet ;  
So well your words his noble virtues praise,  
That all both judge you to relate them true,  
And to possess them, honour'd Margaret.

*J. Milton*

Mrs. Anne Killigrew      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

THOU youngest Virgin-daughter of the skies,  
Made in the last promotion of the blest ;  
Whose palms, new pluck'd from Paradise,  
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,  
Rich with immortal green above the rest ;

## The Paragons

Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,  
Thou roll'st above us in thy wandering race,  
Or in procession fix'd and regular  
Mov'st with the heavens' majestic pace,  
Or, call'd to more superior bliss,  
Thou tread'st with Seraphims the vast abyss :  
Whatever happy region be thy place,  
Cease thy celestial song a little space ;  
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,  
Since Heaven's eternal year is thine.  
Hear, then, a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,  
In no ignoble verse,  
But such as thy own voice did practise here,  
When thy first fruits of poesy were given,  
To make thyself a welcome inmate there ;  
While yet a young probationer,  
And candidate of Heaven.

If by traduction came thy mind,  
Our wonder is the less to find  
A soul so charming from a stock so good ;  
Thy father was transfused into thy blood !  
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,  
An early, rich and inexhausted vein,  
But if thy pre-existing soul  
Was formed at first with myriads more,  
It did through all the mighty poets roll  
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,  
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.  
If so, then cease thy flight, O heaven-born mind !  
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore :  
Nor can thy Soul a fairer mansion find  
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind :  
Return, to fill or mend the quire of thy celestial kind.

## Her Infinite Variety

May we presume to say that, at thy birth,  
New joy was sprung in Heaven as well as here on Earth?  
For sure the milder planets did combine  
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,  
And e'en the most malicious were in trine.  
Thy brother-angels at thy birth  
Strung each his lyre, and tuned it high,  
That all the people of the sky  
Might know a poetess was born on Earth ;  
And then, if ever, mortal ears  
Had heard the music of the spheres.  
And if no clustering swarm of bees  
On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,  
'Twas that such vulgar miracles  
Heaven had not leisure to renew ;  
For all the blest fraternity of love  
Solemnized there thy birth, and kept thy holiday above.

. . . . .  
Art she had none, yet wanted none,  
For Nature did that want supply :  
So rich in treasures of her own,  
She might our boasted stores defy :  
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn  
That it seem'd borrow'd, where 'twas only born.  
Her morals too were in her bosom bred,  
By great examples, daily fed,  
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read.  
And to be read herself she need not fear ;  
Each test and every light her Muse will bear,  
Though Epictetus with his lamp were there.  
E'en love (for love sometimes her Muse exprest),  
Was but a lambent flame which play'd about her breast ;  
Light as the vapours of a morning dream,  
So cold herself, whilst she such warmth exprest,  
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.



## The Paragons

Born to the spacious Empire of the Nine,  
One would have thought she should have been content  
To manage well that mighty Government,  
But what can young ambitious souls confine?  
To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,  
For Painture near adjoining lay,  
A plenteous province and alluring prey.  
A chamber of Dependences was framed,  
(As conquerors will never want pretence,  
When armed, to justify the offence),  
And the whole fief, in right of Poetry, she claim'd.  
The country open lay without defence,  
For poets frequent inroads there had made,  
And perfectly could represent  
The shape, the face, with every lineament,  
And all the large domains which the Dumb Sister  
    sway'd;  
All bowed beneath her government,  
Received in triumph wheresoe'er she went.  
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul design'd,  
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the image in her  
    mind.






. . . . .  
Now all those charms, that blooming grace,  
The well-proportion'd shape and beauteous face,  
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes ;  
In earth the much-lamented Virgin lies.

. . . . .  
Meantime, her warlike brother on the seas  
His waving streamers to the winds displays,  
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.  
Ah, generous youth ! that wish forbear,  
The winds too soon will waft thee here !  
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come ;  
Alas ! thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at home.

## Her Infinite Variety

No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,  
Thou hast already had her last embrace.  
But look aloft, and if thou ken'st from far,  
Among the Pleiads, a new-kindled star,  
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,  
'Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

*John Dryden*

Rachel, Lady Russell     

### I

AT ten o'clock my lady left him. He kissed her four or five times ; and she kept her sorrow so within herself that she gave him no disturbance by their parting. After she was gone, he said, "Now the bitterness of death is past," and ran out a long discourse concerning her—how great a blessing she had been to him ; and said what a misery it would have been to him, if she had not had that magnanimity of spirit, joined to her tenderness, as never to have desired him to do a base thing for the saving of his life.

*Bishop Burnet*

### II

MY friendships have made all the joys and troubles of my life ; and yet who would live and not love ? Those who have tried the insipidness of it would, I believe, never choose it. Mr. Waller says 'tis (with singing) all we know they do above ! for if there is so charming a delight in the love and suitableness in humours to creatures, what must it be to the clarified spirits to love in the presence of God.

*Rachel, Lady Russell*

## The Paragons

Mrs. Godolphin



WERE it never soe dark, wett, or uncomfortable weather, dureing the severity of winter, she would rarely omit being att the chappell att 7 a'clock prayers, and if a Communion day, how late soever her attendance were on the Queen, and her owne exterordinary preparation kept her up, she would be dressed and att her private Devotions some hours before the publick office began.

This brings to remembrance what I could not then but smile att, that finding one day a long pack thread passing through the keyhole of her chamber doore, and reaching to her bed's head (opposite to that of your sisters, if I be not mistaken,) and inquireing what it signified, I att last understood, itt had been to awaken her early in the morning, the Centinell, whose station was of course near the entrance, being desired to pull it very hard att such an hour, whilst the other extream was tyed fast about her wrist, fearing her maid might oversleep her selfe, or call her later than she had appointed.

But besides the monthly Communions, she rarely missed a Sunday throughout the whole year, wherein she did not receive the holy Sacrament if she were in towne and tollerable health ; and I well know she had those who gave her constant advertisement where it was celebrated upon some more solemn festivals, besides not seldome on the weeke days assisting at one poore Creature's or other ; and when sometymes, being in the Country, or on a Journey, she had not these oppertunities she made use of a devout meditation upon the sacred Mistery, by way of mentall Communion, soe as she was in a continuall state of preparation : and O, with what unspeakable care and niceness did she use to dress and

## Her Infinite Variety

trim her soul against this Heavenly Banquett ; with what flagrant devotion at the altar. I doe assure your Ladyshipp, I have seen her receive the holy symbolles, with such an humble and melting joy in her countenance, as seem'd to be something of transport, not to say angelic—something I cannot describe : and she has herselfe confessed to me to have felt in her soule such influxes of heavenly joy as has almost carryed her into another world : I doe not call them Raptures and Illapses, because she would not have endured to be esteemed above other humble Christians ; butt that she was sometyes visitted with extraordinary favours I have many reasons to believe : see what upon another occasion she writes to me. . . .

Noe sooner was she descended from her bed, but she fell on her knees in profound adoration ; and all the tyme of her dressing,—which for the most part she finish'd of herselfe without other help,—her mayd was reading some part of Scripture to her, and when her assistance was necessary, she would take the booke herselfe, and read to her maid ; thus continually imploy'd she meditations, till she was fully dress'd ; which she would be in a very little tyme, even to all the agreeable circumstances becomeing her, because indeed she became everything, and this early rising and little indulgence to her ease, made her look like a flower, lovely, and fresh, and full of health ; being in this posture, she withdrew to private devotion in her closett, till her servant advertised her it was tyme to goe to the Chappell, where she was ever with the first of the devout sex, were it never soe wett, cold, and darke, even before day breake, in midst of winter. . . .

She was sometyes engaged to pass the after dynner att Cards, especially when she came to Berkley House, (where was great resort,) more to comply with others,

## The Paragons

than that she tooke the least delight in it ; and tho' being commonly extreamly fortunate, and very skillfull, she commonly rose a winner, and allwayes reserved her winnings for the poore, itt was yett amongst the greatest afflictions of her life, when, to comply with some persons of Qualitye, she satt anything long att itt. . . .







Never was there a more unspotted Virgin, a more loyall wife, a more sincere friend, a more consummate Christian ; add to this, a florid youth, an exquisite and naturall beauty, and gracefullness the most becomeing. Nor was she to be disguised ; there was nothing more quick and piercing than her apprehension, nothing more faithfull than her memory, more solid and mature than her Judgement, insomuch as I have heard her husband affirme to me (whose discernment all that have the honour to know him will allow to be extraordinary) that even in the greatest difficultyes and occasions, he has both asked and preferred her advice with continuall Success, and with these solid parts she had all the advantages of a most sparkling witt, a natural eloquence, a gentle and agreeable tone of voice, and a charmeing accent when she spake. whilst the Charmes of her Countenance were made up of the greatest Innocence, modesty, and goodness Imaginable, agreeable to the Composure of her thoughts, and the union of a thousand perfections ; add to all this, she was Just, Invincible, Secrett, ingeniously sinceere, faithfull in her promises, and to a Miracle temperate, and mistress of her passions and resolutions, and soe well had she employed her spann of tyme, that as oft as I consider how much she knew, and writt, and did, I am plainly astonished, and blush even for my selfe.

O how delightfull entertaining was this Lady, how grave her discourse, how unlike the Conversation of her

## Her Infinite Variety

sex. When she was the most facetious, it would allways end in a chearfull composedness the most becomeing in the world, for she was the tenderest Creature living of taking advantage of another's imperfections ; nothing could be more humble and full of Compassion, nothing more disposed to all offices of kindness. In a word, what perfections were scattered amongst others of her sex, seem'd here to be united, and she went every day improveing, shineing brighter and ascending still in vertue.

*John Evelyn*

Dorothy Selby      

Dedicated to the pious memory of







DAME DOROTHY SELBY

**S**HE was a Dorcas

Whose curious needle turn'd the abused stage  
Of this lewd world into a golden age :  
Whose pen of steele, and silken inke, enroll'd  
The acts of Jona in records of gold ;  
Whose art disclos'd that plott, which had it taken,  
Rome has triumph't and Britaine's walls had shaken.

Shee was

In heart a Lydia, and in tongue a Hanna,  
In zeal a Ruth, in wedlock a Susanna,  
Prudently simple, providently wary,  
To the world a Martha, and to heaven a Mary.

Ann Baynard      

**T**O these I might add that learned and Ingenious young Gentlewoman, Mrs. Ann Baynard, lately Deceased, who, as Mr. Prude says, in her Funeral Sermon, even in her green years, at the Age of Twenty Three, was arrived to the Knowledge of a Bearded Philosopher ;

## The Paragons

and was in the hard and Knotty Arguments of Metaphysical Learning a most nervous and subtle Disputant. And as he says, It is not long since that she took great pains to perfect her Knowledge in the Greek Tongue, that she might with greater Pleasure read that Eloquent Father St. Chrysostome in his own Pure and Native Style.

Her being very well acquainted with the Greek Testament, in which she was much conversant, was a great Help to improve her Skill in that Language.

She compos'd many things in the Latine Tongue, which were Rare and Useful in their kind ; wherein it does appear she had a Beauty in her Style as well as in her Countenance. She still coveted more and more Knowledge ; and in this Particular alone, she would often say, It was a sin to be contented with but a little. . . .

She has often by her nervous arguments, and the Grace of God which was in her, put to silence those bold men, who have attempted (even in these our days, when the Light of the Gospel is so clearly shining among us) to revive that Old and Baffled Heresie of Socinus : And she did much lament that such Lewd opinions should gain any Footing or the least Entertainment among those that profess the Religion of the Crucify'd Jesus. . . .

What is it (saith she) to be so skilful in Astronomy as that by the Motions of the Heavens we can foretel things here below, if we never study by our Practices to come thither ?

What is it to be so skilful in Arithmetick, as that we can divide and sub-divide to the smallest fractions ; if (as God hath revealed unto us in his Holy Word) we do not so learn to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto wisdom ? . . .

When just upon her Departure she utter'd these words :—I desire (says she) that all young People may



## Her Infinite Variety

be exhorted to the Practice of Vertue, and to encrease their Knowledge by the study of Philosophy, and more especially to read the great Book of Nature, wherein they may see the Wisdom and Power of the great Creator, in the order of the Universe, and in the Production, and Preservation of things ; for *Quælibet herba Deum*.

This was a Language which was very familiar to her ; and if you would know the English of it, she would have you to understand thus much by it ; that the least Spire of Grass, as well as the Lillies of the Field, do demonstrate the Being of a God. . . .

That Women (says she) are capable of such Improvements, which will better their Judgements and Understandings, is past all doubt ; would they but set to't in earnest, and spend but half of that time in Study and Thinking, which they do in Visits, Vanity and Toys.

*Timothy Rogers*

Lady Fitzgerald



SUCH age how beautiful ! O Lady bright,  
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refin'd  
By favouring nature and a saintly mind  
To something purer and more exquisite  
Than flesh and blood ; whene'er thou meet'st my sight,  
When I behold thy blanch'd unwither'd cheek,  
Thy temples fring'd with locks of gleaming white,  
And head that droops because the Soul is meek,  
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare :  
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb  
From desolation toward the genial prime ;  
Or with the moon conquering earth's misty air,  
And filling more and more with crystal light  
As pensive evening deepens into night.

*William Wordsworth*



## The Paragons

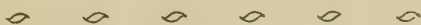
Frances Dobbs



HERE lyes the body of Frances Dobbs, daughter of Edward Dobbs, rector of Great Snoring in Norfolk, a considerable sufferer for the Royal Cause in the Reign of King Charles I. ; and, as if virtues were inheritable, her Father's conscience and courage seemed to descend to her. Her Religion having the ascendant, governed the niceties of practice and secured the manner and the end. She was obliging without flattery, charitable without vanity, and generous without design ; and, by despising interest and hating self-love, she made even the most unfriendly passions serviceable and inoffensive. Her singularities were always to advantage, being unlike her neighbours only by being better. She was humble but not mean, pious but not morose. Here was innocence and agreeableness, observance and reality, friendship and plain-dealing, happily proportioned, and joined for ornament and defence ; insomuch that she seems to have been made for model and example, and rather for others than herself. Her patience under sickness was invincible, her mind easy and resigned ; so that here Death may be said to kill, but not to conquer, the force of it being felt, but not the terrors ; and thus, to finish life to the greater exactness, the last stroaks were bold and beautiful.

*Jeremy Taylor*

Incognita



SACRED to the rare and fragrant memory of  
AN UNKNOWN LADY,






who took off her hat at a matinée on January 9, 1908,  
without being asked.

## XXIII

### THE BLUES

How generous the conduct of Mrs. —, who, as a literary woman, might be ugly if she choose, but is as decidedly handsome as if she were profoundly ignorant ! I call such conduct honourable.

*Sydney Smith*

Madge Newcastle                    

AS for my Disposition, it is more inclining to be melancholy than merry, but not crabbed or peevishly melancholy, but soft, melting, solitary, and contemplating melancholy ; and I am apt to weep rather than laugh : not that I do often either of them ; also I am tender natured, for it troubles my conscience to kill a fly, and the groans of a dying Beast strike my soul. Also where I place a particular affection, I love extraordinarily and constantly, yet not fondly, but soberly and observingly, not to hang about them as a trouble, but to wait upon them as a servant ; but this affection will take no root, but where I think or find merit, and have leave both from Divine and Morall laws ; yet I find this passion so troublesome, as it is the only torment to my life, for fear any evill misfortune or accident, or sickness, or death, should come unto them, insomuch as I am never freely at rest. Likewise I am gratefull, for I never

## The Blues

received a courtesie but I am impatient and troubled untill I can return it. Also I am chaste, both by Nature and Education, insomuch as I do abhorre an unchaste thought. Likewise I am seldom angry, as my servants may witness for me, for I rather choose to suffer some inconveniences than disturbe my thoughts, which makes me winke many times at their faultes ; but when I am angry, I am very angry, but yet it is soon over, and I am easily pacified, if it be not such an injury as may create a hate. Neither am I apt to be exceptious or jealous. . . .

Also in some cases I am naturally a coward, and in other cases very valiant ; as for example, if any of my neerest friends were in danger, I should never consider my life in striving to help them, though I were sure to do them no good, and would willingly, nay cheerfully, resign my life for their sakes : likewise I should not spare my Life, if Honour bid me dye ; but in a danger where my Friends, or my Honour is not concerned, or engaged, but only my Life to be unprofitably lost, I am the veriest Coward in Nature, as upon the Sea, or any dangerous places, or of Thieves, or fire, or the like ; nay the shooting of a gun, although but a pop-gun, will make me start, and stop my hearing, much less have I courage to discharge one ; or if a sword should be held against me, although but in jest, I am afraid. Also as I am not covetous, so I am not prodigall, but of the two I am inclining to be prodigall, yet I cannot say to a vain prodigallity, because I imagine it is to a profitable end ; for perceiving the world is given, or apt to honour the outside more than the inside, worshipping show more than substance ; I am so vain, if it be vanity, as to endeavour to be worship't, rather than not to be regarded ; yet I shall never be so prodigall as to impoverish my friends, or go beyond the limits or facilitie of our estate. And though I desire

## Her Infinite Variety

to appear to the best advantage, whilst I live in the view of the public World, yet I could most willingly exclude myself, so as never to see the face of any creature, but my Lord, as long as I live, inclosing myself like an Anchoret, wearing a frieze gown, tied with a cord about my waste. But I hope my readers will not think me vain for writing my life, since there have been many that have done the like, as Cesar, Ovid, and many more, both men and women, and I know no reason I may not do it as well as they: but I verily believe some censuring Readers will scornfully say, why hath this Lady writ her own Life? since none cares to know whose daughter she was, or whose wife she is, or how she was bred, or what fortunes she had, or how she lived, or what humour or disposition she was of. I answer that it is true, that 'tis to no purpose to the Reader, but it is to the Authoress, because I write it for my own sake, not theirs. Neither did I intend this piece for to delight, but to divulge; not to please the fancy, but to tell the truth, lest after-ages should mistake, in not knowing I was daughter to one Master Lucas of St. Johns, near Colchester, in Essex, second wife to the Lord Marquis of Newcastle; for my Lord having had two wives, I might easily have been mistaken, especially if I should dye and my Lord marry again.

*Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle*

Maria Wyndham



MR. WYNDHAM: In our female boarding-schools, girls should undoubtedly be taught those useful arts, which will qualify them for the duties of domestic life, and not have their time almost wholly occupied in

## The Blues

the acquisition of ornamental accomplishments. A taste for drawing and music is certainly very proper to be cultivated, in those females who are intended to appear in the higher classes of life : but for those who are intended to be the wives of tradesmen, the more useful arts should have a decided preference.

MRS. WYNDHAM : As our daughter, Maria, will have no inconsiderable fortune, it has been our desire, that she should have some knowledge of literature, and that she might not be destitute of any of those ornamental accomplishments that might become a woman of fashion : but I have also endeavoured so to qualify her for the duties of a wife, that in no situation she might be found incapable of being useful, or of discharging the proper offices of a virtuous woman, whether in prosperity or in adversity.







MISS MARIA WYNDHAM : I am extremely grateful, madam, to you and to my papa, for your tender anxiety for my welfare, and for the judicious pains that have been taken in my education ; and I hope to be able to evince, that your care has not been thrown away. I am convinced of the importance of acquiring that species of knowledge, which is necessary for the just discharge of those relative and social virtues that are incumbent upon females ; and I would also acquire some knowledge of an higher kind. I would willingly endeavour to preserve the proper medium between the character of a woman so addicted to literature, as to be unfit for the ordinary duties of life ; and of a woman so engrossed by those ordinary duties, and common cares, as never to rise above the vulgar standard, or entertain any sentiments of a refined or elevated nature. I would aim

## Her Infinite Variety

to be what a woman ought to be in polished society ; I would not neglect the ornamental accomplishments ; but I would chiefly aspire after those virtues which are most honourable to our sex, and which are pointed out to us by nature and by reason.

MRS. WYNDHAM : My dear Maria, I greatly applaud your sentiments. Your beauty will fade, and years will remove your personal attractions. But if your heart be formed to virtue, and your mind be well cultivated, you will continue, even in the decline of life, to be esteemed and beloved.

*Dialogues Concerning the Ladies* (1785)

Lydia White                        

DO you know Byron's literary eclogue, "The Blues"? No? Well, well, this isn't a literary examination, and moreover Byron himself called this skit on "blue-stocking" society a "mere buffoonery never meant for publication." But in it occur these lines :

LADY BLUEBOTTLE : " Well, now we break up ;  
But remember, *Miss Diddle* invites us to sup."

INKEL : " Then at two hours past midnight we'll all meet again,  
For the sciences, sandwiches, hock, and champagne."

Here, Miss Diddle is no other than the clever, eccentric, learned, wealthy, soirée-giving Miss Lydia White, of No. 113 Park Street, Grosvenor Square. Let us lift the curtain without more ado on one of her dinners and one of her witticisms. Byron's friend and old Harrow schoolfellow, the Rev. William Harness, writes to a brother clergyman : " At one of Miss Lydia White's small

## The Blues

and most agreeable dinners in Park Street the company (most of them, except the hostess, being Whigs) were discussing in rather a querulous strain the desperate prospects of their party. 'Yes,' said Sydney Smith, 'we are in a most deplorable condition. We must do something to help ourselves; I think we had better sacrifice a Tory virgin.' This was pointedly addressed to Lydia White, who at once, catching and applying the allusion to Iphigenia, answered, 'I believe there is nothing the Whigs would not do *to raise the wind.*'" Lydia White was said to have been a figure not only in Park Street, but in every capital in Europe. In a catalogue of English visitors at Naples in 1828 George Ticknor has her as "Miss Lydia White, the fashionable blue-stockings." Just twenty years earlier than this, Sir Walter Scott had witnessed her progress through the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh. In 1808 he writes: "We have here a very diverting lion and sundry beasts; but the most meritorious is Miss Lydia White, who is what Oxonians call a lioness of the first order, with stockings nineteen times dyed blue, very lively, very good-humoured, and extremely absurd. It is very diverting to see the sober Scotch ladies staring at this phenomenon." Lydia White even travelled a little with the Scotts. She and Mrs. Scott sketched together, Scott remarking that their cataracts looked like haystacks, and their rocks like "old-fashioned cabinets with their folding-doors open." You will find much about Lydia White in Moore's Diary and in Samuel Rogers's *Table Talk*. Rogers said of Miss White in 1826: "How wonderfully she does hold out! They may say what they will, but Miss White and Missolonghi are the most remarkable things going."

To the last, with a pathetic fortitude, Miss White



## Her Infinite Variety

kept her little ball rolling in Park Street. Only a year after Rogers paid the above tribute to her staying powers, Lydia White died, and Scott made this entry in his Journal: "Hear of Miss White's death. Poor Lydia! She had a party at dinner on the Friday before, and had written with her own hand invitations for another party. Twenty years ago she used to tease me with her youthful affectations—her dressing like the Queen of Chimney-sweeps on May Day morning, and sometimes with rather a free turn in conversation, when she let her wit run wild. But she was a woman of much wit, and had a feeling and kind heart. She made her point good, a *bas-bleu* in London to a point not easily attained, and contrived to have every evening a very good literary *mêlée*, and little dinners which were very entertaining. She had also the newest lions upon town. In a word she was not, and would not, be forgotten even when disease obliged her, as it did for years, to confine herself to her couch; and the world, much abused for hard-heartedness, was kind in her case—so she lived in the society she liked. No great expenditure was necessary for this. She had an easy fortune, but not more. Poor Lydia! I saw the Duke of York and her in London, when Death, it seems, was brandishing his dart over them.

"'The view o't gave them little fright.'"

*Wilfred Whitten*

The Blue Stockings



I CANNOT name all who thus issued from air,  
As the god made us see them;—but Sappho was  
there,



## The Blues

As brown as a berry, and little of size ;  
But lord ! with such midnight and love in her eyes !  
Aspasia's, however, we thought still more loving ;  
Heart sat in their pupils, and gentlest approving.  
We saw (only fancy it !) Pericles hand her ;  
And both (I e in testify) look'd up at Landor.  
Of Romans (whose women more startle than lull us)  
Came none but the dame that's bound up with Tibullus ;  
But France furnished many, and Italy fair ;  
The laurel look'd sweet in their wild flowing hair ;  
Colonna came noble, in widow's black gown ;  
And Stampa, who worshipp'd a living renown ;  
Navarre's fair Boccaccio ; the Rope-maker too ;  
Deshoulières, kind and pensive ; De Launay the true ;  
Sévigné, good mother, a little too fussy,  
But how, when she will, she beats Walpole and Bussy !  
Old selfish Du Deffand, more knowing than wise ;  
And Genlis didactic, and D'Houdetot's eyes ;  
And de Staël, mighty mistress, *par Napoleoni*,  
(For so he would make her), and dear Riccoboni ;  
Then Newcastle's Duchess, fantastic but rare ;  
And Behn and Centlivre, that plain-spoken pair ;  
And Wortley, who, had she been bred in a harem,  
Had turn'd it, infallibly, all harum scarum ;  
And sweet Brooke aforesaid, all cover'd with may,  
And Lady Ann, lovely for "Auld Robin Gray" ;  
And dearest dear Winchelsea, whom I prefer,  
After all, she so jumps with me, even to her :  
(For although Lady Ann lov'd maternity, *she*  
Lov'd love and the trees so, she might have lov'd me) ;  
But I see high-born Devonshire, who with such pith  
Wrote of Tell and his platform ; and poor Charlotte  
Smith.

*Leigh Hunt*

## Her Infinite Variety

Regina's Maids of Honour    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

WHAT are they doing? what they should; with volant tongue and chatty cheer, welcoming in, by prattle good, or witty phrase, or comment shrewd, the opening of the gay new year. Mrs. Hall, so fair and true, bids her brilliant eyes to glow,—eyes the brightest of the Nine would be but too proud to show. *Outlaw* he, and *Buccaneer*, who'd refuse to worship here. And next the mistress of the shell (not of lobster but the lyre), see the lovely L. E. L., talks with tongue that will not tire. True, she turns away her face, out of pity to us men; but the swan-like neck we trace, and the figure full of grace, and the *mignon* hand whose pen wrote the *Golden Violet*, and the *Literary Gazette*, and *Francesca's* mournful story (isn't she painted *con amore*?). Who is next? Miladi dear. Glad are we to see you here. Naughty fellows, we must plead, that with voice of angry organ, once or twice we did, indeed, speak not civilly of *Morgan*; but we must retract, repent, promise better to behave. *She*, we are certain, will consent, all our former feuds to waive; and as we know she hates O'Connell, who calls her now a blockhead old, we shall say that in *O'Donnell*, and in other tales she told, there is many a page of fun,—many a bit for hearty laughing,—some to shed a tear upon,—some to relish while we're quaffing; and that she can use the mawleys, she has shown upon the "Crawleys." Prate away, then, good Miladi,—gossip, gossip, bore and bore,—all for him, who to the shady grove has gone for years a score,—for the sake of old Macowen, and his song of "Modereen Roo,"—for your father's sake we are going never more to bother you.

Full the face, that flashes near her; can we draw away our gaze? Vision nobler, brighter, dearer, did

## The Blues

ne'er on human eyeball blaze. Front sublime and orb of splendour, glance that every thought can speak ; feeling proud, or pathos tender, the lid to wet, to burn the cheek ; or, my halting rhyme to shorten, can't I say 'tis Mrs. Norton ? Heiress of a race to whom genius his constant boon has given, through long descended lines to bloom in wit of Earth or strains of Heaven ! Oh ! if thy Wandering Jew had seen those sunny eyes, those locks of jet, how vain, how trifling would have been the agony of fond regret which in thy strains he's made to feel for the creatures of thy brain,—*those* wounds thou say'st he lived to heal,—thee lost, he ne'er had loved again ! Oh, gorgeous Countess !<sup>1</sup> gayer notes for all that's charming, sweet and smiling, for her whose pleasant tales our throats are ever with fresh laughs beguiling. Say, shall we call thee bright and fair, enchanting, winning ? but, no ! far hence such praise as ours ; what need she care for aught beyond Sir Thomas Lawrence ? Go, try to read, although his quill is too mean and dull, what she inspired even in so great a sumph as Willis ; and if that Yankee boy admired, who can a Christian person blame, if he, all Countess-smit, pretends that, if she lets him near the flame of her warm glance he'd think it shame that, like her book, she and he should look as nothing nearer than two friends ?

Our Muse then, in a hurry, passes the pretty ladies by the glasses, and comes to where Miss Porter (Jane) is her sweet cup of coffee stirring, and in a soft and easy strain of Mrs. Skinner's parties purring. Miss Martineau, with serious brow, beside the author fair of *Thaddeus*, is meditating, grimly, how she can prevent the very bad use that people have in this sad earth of putting things into confusion, by giving certain matters birth, in spite of

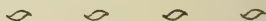
<sup>1</sup> Of Blessington.

## Her Infinite Variety

theories Malthusian. And last, the jolliest of them all, soft-seated on a well filled bustle, her coffee sips, by Mrs. Hall—dear, darling Mitford (Mary Russell). Long may she live with graphic touch (though Croquis paint her here left-handed) our English scenes in pencillings Dutch, as neat as ever Douw commanded, in all their easy, quiet beauty—their modest forms, or grave, or gay, —their homely cares, their honest duty, with heart all English to display.

*Dr. Maginn*

Miss Harriet Martineau



COME, let us touch the string,  
And try a song to sing,  
Though this is somewhat difficult at starting, O !  
And in our case more than ever,  
When a desperate endeavour,  
Is made to sing the praise of Harry Martineau !

We might get on pretty well,  
With the pretty L. E. L.,  
Our compliments unlimitedly carting, O !  
We'd call her fair, not wise,  
And we'd laud her laughing eyes,—  
But this would never do with Harry Martineau !

For wisdom is *her* forte ;  
And, Lord knows, to pay your court,  
To women who talk wisdom is departing, O !  
From the very laws of chatter,  
Which, like the laws of matter,  
Shine clear before the soul of Harry Martineau !

## The Blues

Oh ! how she shows her reading,  
When she writes about good breeding,  
And tells us what good house-wives have their heart  
in, O !

She points the way to riches,  
If they would resign the breeches—  
But that is all my eye to Harry Martineau !

She'll also tell you how, man,  
To be a perfect ploughman,  
And how to give a pound a touch at parting, O !  
That'll bring it back again,  
With a rich attendant train,  
But that we fear's my eye and Harry Martineau !

Of bacon, eggs, and butter,  
Rare philosophy she'll utter ;  
Not a thing about your house but she'll take part in, O !  
As to mine, with all my soul,  
She might take (and pay) the whole—  
But that is all my eye and Harry Martineau !

Her political economy  
Is as true as Deuteronomy :  
And the monster of Distress she sticks a dart in, O !  
Yet still he stalks about,  
And makes a mighty rout,  
But that we hope's my eye and Harry Martineau !

So having said my say, sir,  
And done my best to praise her,—  
A task, which, when a youngster, I'd some art in, O !  
As perhaps I may have now, sir,—  
With this I make my bow, sir,—  
All lustre to the eyes of Harry Martineau !

*Dr. Maginn*

## Her Infinite Variety

The Countess of Blessington ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

“LADY BLESSINGTON!” cried the glad usher  
aloud,

As she swam through the doorway, like moon from a  
cloud ;

I know not which most her face beam'd with—fine  
creature !—

Enjoyment, or judgment, or wit, or good nature.

Perhaps you have known what it is to feel longings

To pat silken shoulders at routs, and such throngings;—

Well, think what it is with a vision like that !—

A grace after dinner ! a Venus grown fat !

Some “elderly gentleman” risk'd an objection ;

But this only made us all swear her “perfection.”

His arms the host threw round the liberal bodice,

And kiss'd her, exactly as god might do goddess.

*Leigh Hunt*

Lady Morgan ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

AND dear Lady Morgan ! Look, look how she  
comes,

With her pulses all beating for freedom like drums ;

So Irish, so modish, so *mixtish*, so wild,

So committing herself, as she talks, like a child ;

So trim, yet so easy ; *petite*, yet big-hearted,

That truth and she, try all she can, won't be parted.

She'll put on your fashions, your latest new air,

And then talk so frankly, she'll make you all stare ;—

Mrs. Hall may say “Oh,” and Miss Edgeworth say

“Fie,”

But my lady will know all the what and the why.

## The Blues

Her books, a like mixture, are so very clever,  
The god himself swore he could read them for ever ;  
Plot, character, freakishness, all are so good ;  
And the heroine's herself playing tricks in a hood.  
So he kiss'd her, and called her " eternal good wench " ;  
But asked, Why the devil she spoke so much French ?

*Dr. Maginn*

Maria Edgeworth      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

AT the sight of Miss Edgeworth, he said, Here  
comes one,  
As sincere and as kind as lives under the sun ;  
Not poetical, eh ?—not much giv'n to insist  
On utilities not in utility's list  
(Things, nevertheless, without which the large heart  
Of my world would but play a poor husk of a part),  
But most truly, within her own sphere, sympathetic,  
And that's no mean help tow'rds the practic-poetic.  
Then, smiling, he said a most singular thing,—  
He thank'd her for making him " saving of string " !  
But for fear she should fancy he didn't approve her in  
Matters more weighty, prais'd much her " Manœuvring,"  
A book, which if aught could pierce craniums so dense,  
Might supply cunning folks with a little good sense.  
And her Irish (he added) poor souls ! so impress'd him,  
He knew not if most they amus'd or distress'd him.

*Leigh Hunt*

Mrs. Norton      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

WHEN I first knew Caroline Sheridan, she had  
not long been married to the Hon. George  
Norton. She was splendidly handsome, of an un-



## Her Infinite Variety

English character of beauty, her rather large and heavy head and features recalling the grandest Grecian and Italian models, to the latter of whom her rich colouring and blue-black braids of hair gave her an additional resemblance.

Though neither as perfectly lovely as the Duchess of Somerset, nor as perfectly charming as Lady Dufferin, she produced a far more striking impression than either of them, by the combination of the poetical genius with which she alone, of the three, was gifted, with the brilliant wit and power of repartee which they (especially Lady Dufferin) possessed in common with her, united to the exceptional beauty with which they were all three endowed. Mrs. Norton was extremely epigrammatic in her talk, and comically dramatic in her manner of narrating things. I do not know whether she had any theatrical talent, though she sang pathetic and humorous songs admirably, and I remember shaking in my shoes when, soon after I came out, she told me she envied me, and would give anything to try the stage herself. I thought, as I looked at her wonderful, beautiful face, "Oh, if you should, what would become of me!" She was no musician, but had a deep, sweet contralto voice, precisely the same in which she always spoke, and which, combined with her always lowered eyelids ("downy eyelids" with sweeping silken fringes), gave such an incomparably comic effect to her sharp retorts and ludicrous stories; and she sang with great effect her own and Lady Dufferin's social satires, "Fanny Grey" and "Miss Myrtle," etc., and sentimental songs like "Would I were with Thee," "I dreamt 'twas but a Dream," etc., of which the words were her own, and the music, which only amounted to a few chords with the simplest modulations, her own

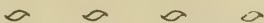


## The Blues

also. I remember she used occasionally to convulse her friends *en petit comité* with a certain absurd song called "The Widow," to all intents and purposes a piece of broad comedy, the whole story of which (the wooing of a disconsolate widow by a rich lover, whom she first rejects and then accepts) was comprised in a few words, rather spoken than sung, eked out by a ludicrous burthen of "rum-ti-iddy-iddy-iddy-ido," which, by dint of her countenance and voice, conveyed all the alternations of the widow's first despair, her lover's fiery declaration, her virtuous indignation and wrathful rejection of him, his cool acquiescence and intimation that his full purse assured him an easy acceptance in various other quarters, her rage and disappointment at his departure, and final relenting and consent on his return ; all of which with her "iddy-iddy-ido" she sang, or rather acted, with incomparable humour and effect.

*Fanny Kemble*

Lady Joan Fitz-Warene



LADY Joan Fitz-Warene only required a listener ; she did not make inquiries like Lady Maud, or impart her own impressions by suggesting them as your own. Lady Joan gave Egremont an account of the Aztec cities, of which she had been reading that morning, and of the several historical theories which their discovery had suggested ; then she imparted her own, which differed from all, but which seemed clearly the right one. Mexico led to Egypt. Lady Joan was as familiar with the Pharaohs as with the Caciques of the New World. The phonetic system was despatched by the way. Then came Champollion ; then Paris ; then all its celebrities, literary and especially scientific ; then came the letter

## Her Infinite Variety

from Arago received that morning ; and the letter from Dr. Buckland expected to-morrow. She was delighted that one had written ; wondered why the other had not. Finally, before the ladies had retired, she had invited Egremont to join Lady Marney in a visit to her observatory, where they were to behold a comet which she had been the first to detect.

*B. Disraeli*

### Literary Ladies



AS to the position of the body when at work, that is as you please. I generally found George Eliot doubled up on a sofa, her legs up under her, heaps of robes, and a pad on her lap. I read that Mrs. Browning always wrote in bed. I know that Mrs. Wagner—Madge Morris—does ; while Miss Coolbrith writes, she tells me, on her feet, going along about her affairs till her poem is complete, and then writing it down exactly as she has framed it in her mind. Harriet Prescott Spofford writes on a pad in her lap in the parlour, under the trees with a party, takes part in the talk as she writes, and is generally the brightest of the company. Lady Hardy told me she could only write with her face to the blank wall, while Mrs. Braddon, the prolific, showed me her desk bowered in her Richmond Hill garden, where she wrote to the song of birds about forty popular novels.

*Joaquin Miller*

## XXIV

### CHARACTERS

Mrs. Freeland    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

SHE drank good ale, strong punch and wine,  
And lived to the age of ninety-nine.  
*Epitaph in Edwalton Churchyard*

Mrs. Cotton    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

HERE [at Gloucester] is a modernity which beats all antiquities for curiosity : just by the high altar is a small pew hung with green damask, with curtains of the same ; a small corner cupboard, painted, carved, and gilt, for books, in one corner, and two troughs of a bird-cage, with seeds and water. If any mayoress on earth was small enough to enclose herself in this tabernacle, or abstemious enough to feed on rape and canary, I should have sworn that it was the shrine of the queen of the aldermen. It belongs to a Mrs. Cotton, who having lost a favourite daughter, is convinced her soul is transmigrated into a robin-redbreast ; for which reason she passes her life in making an aviary

## Her Infinite Variety

of the Cathedral of Gloucester. The Chapter indulge this whim, as she contributes abundantly to glaze, white-wash, and ornament the church.

*Horace Walpole*

Mrs. Holman

YOU would be more diverted with a Mrs. Holman, whose passion is keeping an assembly, and inviting literally everybody to it. She goes to the drawing-room to watch for sneezes; whips out a curtsy, and then sends next morning to know how your cold does, and to desire your company next Thursday.

*Horace Walpole*

Another Widow

HER house, I am told, must have been built and furnished about the time of Sir Charles Grandison: everything about it is somewhat formal and stately; but has been softened down into a degree of voluptuousness, characteristic of an old lady very tender-hearted and romantic, and that loves her ease. The cushions of the great arm-chair and wide sofas almost bury you when you sit down in them. Flowers of the most rare and delicate kind are placed about the rooms and on little japanned stands; and sweet bags lie about the tables and mantel-pieces. The house is full of pet-dogs, Angola cats, and singing birds, who are as carefully waited upon as she is herself.

She is dainty in her living, and a little of an epicure, living on white meats; and little lady-like dishes, though her servants have substantial English fare, as their looks bear witness. Indeed, they are so indulged, that they are

## Characters

all spoiled, and when they leave their present place, they will be fit for no other. Her ladyship is one of those lazy-tempered beings that are always doomed to be much liked, and but ill served by their domestics, and cheated by all the world.

Much of her time is passed in reading novels, of which she has an extensive library, and has a constant supply from the publishers in town. Her erudition in this line of literature is immense : she has kept pace with the press for half a century. Her mind is stuffed with love-tales of all kinds, from the stately amours of the old books of chivalry down to the best blue-covered romance, reeking from the press : though she evidently gives the preference to those that came out in the days of her youth, and when she was first in love. . . .

She does a vast deal of good in her neighbourhood, and is imposed upon by every beggar in the country. She is the benefactress of a village adjoining to her estate, and takes a special interest in all its love-affairs. She knows of every courtship that is going on ; every love-lorn damsel is sure to find a patient listener and a sage adviser in her ladyship. She takes great pains to reconcile all love-quarrels, and should any faithless swain persist in his inconstancy, he is sure to draw on himself the good lady's violent indignation.

*Washington Irving*







The Marchioness of Hampshire      ♪      ♪      ♪

LADY HAMPSHIRE was an invalid ; but her ailment was one of those mysteries which still remained insoluble, although, in the most liberal manner, she delighted to afford her friends all the information in her power. Never was a votary endowed with a faith at once so

## Her Infinite Variety

lively and so capricious. Each year she believed in some new remedy, and announced herself on the eve of some miraculous cure. But the saint was scarcely canonised before his claims to beatitude were impugned. One year Lady Hampshire never quitted Leamington; another, she contrived to combine the infinitesimal doses of Hahnemann with the colossal distractions of the metropolis. Now her sole conversation was the water cure. Lady Hampshire was to begin immediately after her visit to Montacute, and she spoke in her sawney voice of factitious enthusiasm, as if she pitied the lot of all those who were not about to sleep in wet sheets.

*B. Disraeli*

Mrs. Elton                                    

THE very first subject, after being seated, was Maple Grove, "My brother, Mr. Suckling's seat;" a comparison of Hartfield to Maple Grove. The grounds of Hartfield were small, but neat and pretty; and the house was modern and well-built. Mrs. Elton seemed most favourably impressed by the size of the room, the entrance, and all that she could see or imagine. "Very like Maple Grove indeed! She was quite struck by the likeness!—That room was the very shape and size of the morning-room at Maple Grove; her sister's favourite room." Mr. Elton was appealed to. "Was not it astonishingly like?—She could really almost fancy herself at Maple Grove.

"And the staircase.—You know, as I came in, I observed how very like the staircase was; placed exactly in the same part of the house. I really could not help exclaiming! I assure you, Miss Woodhouse, it is very delightful to me to be reminded of a place I

## Characters

am so extremely partial to as Maple Grove. I have spent so many happy months there!" (with a little sigh of sentiment). "A charming place, undoubtedly. Everybody who sees it is struck by its beauty; but to me it has been quite a home. Whenever you are transplanted, like me, Miss Woodhouse, you will understand how very delightful it is to meet with anything at all like what one has left behind. I always say this is quite one of the evils of matrimony."

Emma made as slight a reply as she could; but it was fully sufficient for Mrs. Elton, who only wanted to be talking herself.

"So extremely like Maple Grove! And it is not merely the house; the grounds, I assure you, as far as I could observe, are strikingly like. The laurels at Maple Grove are in the same profusion as here, and stand very much in the same way—just across the lawn; and I had a glimpse of a fine large tree, with a bench round it, which put me so exactly in mind! My brother and sister will be enchanted with this place. People who have extensive grounds themselves are always pleased with anything in the same style."

Emma doubted the truth of this sentiment. She had a great idea that people who had extensive grounds themselves cared very little for the extensive grounds of anybody else; but it was not worth while to attack an error so double-dyed, and therefore only said in reply—

"When you have seen more of this country I am afraid you will think you have overrated Hartfield. Surry is full of beauties."

"Oh! yes, I am quite aware of that. It is the garden of England, you know. Surry is the garden of England."



## Her Infinite Variety

"Yes; but we must not rest our claims on that distinction. Many counties, I believe, are called the garden of England, as well as Surry."

"No, I fancy not," replied Mrs. Elton, with a most satisfied smile. "I never heard any county but Surry called so."

Emma was silenced.

"My brother and sister have promised us a visit in the spring, or summer at farthest," continued Mrs. Elton; "and that will be our time for exploring. While they are with us we shall explore a great deal, I dare say. They will have their barouche-landau, of course, which holds four perfectly; and therefore, without saying anything of *our* carriage, we should be able to explore the different beauties extremely well. They would hardly come in their chaise, I think, at that season of the year. Indeed, when the time draws on, I shall decidedly recommend their bringing the barouche-landau; it will be so very much preferable. When people come into a beautiful country of this sort, you know, Miss Woodhouse, one naturally wishes them to see as much as possible; and Mr. Suckling is extremely fond of exploring. We explored to King's-Weston twice last summer, in that way, most delightfully, just after their first having the barouche-landau. You have many parties of that kind here, I suppose, Miss Woodhouse, every summer?"

"No; not immediately here. We are rather out of distance of the very striking beauties which attract the sort of parties you speak of; and we are a very quiet set of people, I believe; more disposed to stay at home than engage in schemes of pleasure."

"Ah! there is nothing like staying at home for real comfort. Nobody can be more devoted to home than



## Characters

I am. I was quite a proverb for it at Maple Grove. Many a time has Selina said, when she has been going to Bristol, 'I really cannot get this girl to move from the house. I absolutely must go in by myself, though I hate being stuck up in the barouche-landau without a companion : but Augusta, I believe, with her own good will, would never stir beyond the park paling.' Many a time has she said so ; and yet I am no advocate for entire seclusion. I think, on the contrary, when people shut themselves up entirely from society, it is a very bad thing ; and that it is much more advisable to mix in the world in a proper degree, without living in it either too much or too little. I perfectly understand your situation, however, Miss Woodhouse" (looking towards Mr. Woodhouse), "your father's state of health must be a great drawback. Why does not he try Bath?—Indeed he should. Let me recommend Bath to you. I assure you I have no doubt of its doing Mr. Woodhouse good."

"My father tried it more than once, formerly, but without receiving any benefit ; and Mr. Perry, whose name, I dare say, is not unknown to you, does not conceive it would be at all more likely to be useful now."

"Ah ! that's a great pity ; for I assure you, Miss Woodhouse, where the waters do agree, it is quite wonderful the relief they give. In my Bath life I have seen such instances of it ! And it is so cheerful a place that it could not fail of being of use to Mr. Woodhouse's spirits, which, I understand, are sometimes much depressed. And as to its recommendations to *you*, I fancy I need not take much pains to dwell on them. The advantages of Bath to the young are pretty generally understood. It would be a charming introduction for you, who have lived so secluded a life : and I could

## Her Infinite Variety

immediately secure you some of the best society in the place. A line from me would bring you a little host of acquaintance ; and my particular friend Mrs. Partridge, the lady I have always resided with when in Bath, would be most happy to show you any attentions, and would be the very person for you to go into public with." . . .

"I do not ask whether you are musical, Mrs. Elton. Upon these occasions a lady's character generally precedes her ; and Highbury has long known that you are a superior performer."

"Oh ! no, indeed ; I must protest against any such idea. A superior performer !—very far from it, I assure you : consider from how partial a quarter your information came. I am doatingly fond of music—passionately fond ; and my friends say I am not entirely devoid of taste ; but as to anything else, upon my honour my performance is *mediocre* to the last degree. You, Miss Woodhouse, I well know, play delightfully. I assure you it has been the greatest satisfaction, comfort, and delight to me to hear what a musical society I am got into. I absolutely cannot do without music ; it is a necessary of life to me ; and having always been used to a very musical society, both at Maple Grove and in Bath, it would have been a most serious sacrifice. I honestly said as much to Mr. E. when he was speaking of my future home, and expressing his fears lest the retirement of it should be disagreeable ; and the inferiority of the house too—knowing what I had been accustomed to—of course he was not wholly without apprehension. When he was speaking of it in that way, I honestly said that *the world* I could give up—parties, balls, plays—for I had no fear of retirement. Blessed with so many resources within myself, the world was not

## Characters

necessary to *me*. I could do very well without it. To those who had no resources it was a different thing ; but my resources made me quite independent. And as to smaller-sized rooms than I had been used to, I really could not give it a thought. I hoped I was perfectly equal to any sacrifice of that description. Certainly, I had been accustomed to every luxury at Maple Grove ; but I did assure him that two carriages were not necessary to my happiness, nor were spacious apartments. ‘ But,’ said I, ‘ to be quite honest, I do not think I can live without something of a musical society. I condition for nothing else ; but, without music, life would be a blank to me.’ ”

*Jane Austen*

### The Widow Blacket    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THE widow Blacket, of Oxford, is the largest female I ever had the pleasure of beholding. There may be her parallel upon the earth ; but surely I never saw it. I take her to be lineally descended from the maid’s aunt of Brainford, who caused Master Ford such uneasiness. She hath Atlantean shoulders ; and, as she stoopeth in her gait,—with as few offences to answer for in her own particular as any one of Eve’s daughters,—her back seems broad enough to bear the blame of all the peccadilloes that have been committed since Adam. She girdeth her waist—or what she is pleased to esteem as such—nearly up to her shoulders ; from beneath which that huge dorsal expanse, in mountainous declivity, emergeth. Respect for her alone preventeth the idle boys, who follow her about in shoals, whenever she cometh abroad, from getting up and riding. But her presence infallibly commands a reverence. She is

## Her Infinite Variety

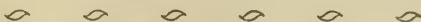
indeed, as the Americans would express it, something awful. Her person is a burthen to herself no less than to the ground which bears her. To her mighty bone, she had a pinguitude withal, which makes the depth of winter to her the most desirable season. Her distress in the warmer solstice is pitiable. During the months of July and August, she usually renteth a cool cellar, where ices are kept, whereinto she descendeth when Sirius rageth. She dates from a hot Thursday,—some twenty-five years ago. Her apartment in summer is pervious to the four winds. Two doors, in north and south direction, and two windows, fronting the rising and the setting sun, never closed, from every cardinal point catch the contributory breezes. She loves to enjoy what she calls a quadruple draught. That must be a shrewd zephyr that can escape her. I owe a painful face-ache, which oppresses me at this moment, to a cold caught, sitting by her, one day in last July, at this receipt of coolness. Her fan, in ordinary, resembleth a banner spread, which she keepeth continually on the alert to detect the least breeze. She possesseth an active and gadding mind, totally incommensurate with her person. No one delighteth more than herself in country exercises and pastimes. . . . Within-doors, her principle diversion is music, vocal and instrumental ; in both which she is no mean professor. Her voice is wonderfully fine ; but till I got used to it, I confess it staggered me. It is, for all the world, like that of a piping bulfinch ; while, from her size and stature, you would expect notes to drown the deep organ. The shake, which most fine singers reserve for the close or cadence, by some unaccountable flexibility, or tremulousness of pipe, she carrieth quite through the composition ; so that her time, to a common air or ballad, keeps double motion, like the earth,—

## Characters

running the primary circuit of the tune, and still revolving upon its own axis. The effect, as I said before, when you are used to it, is as agreeable as it is altogether new and surprising. The spacious apartment of her outward frame lodgeth a soul in all respects disproportionate. Of more than mortal make, she evinceth withal a trembling sensibility, a yielding infirmity of purpose, a quick susceptibility to reproach, and all the train of diffident and blushing virtues, which for their habitation usually seek out a feeble frame, an attenuated and meagre constitution. With more than man's bulk, her humours and occupations are eminently feminine. She sighs,—being six feet high. She languisheth,—being two feet wide. She worketh slender sprigs upon the delicate muslin,—her fingers being capable of moulding a Colossus. She sippeth her wine out of her glass daintily—her capacity being that of a tun of Heidelberg. She goeth mincingly with those feet of hers, whose solidity need not fear the black ox's pressure. Softest and largest of thy sex, adieu ! By what parting attribute may I salute thee, last and best of the Titanesses,—Ogress, fed with milk instead of blood ; not least, or least handsome, among Oxford's stately structures,—Oxford, who, in its deadeast time of vacation, can never properly be said to be empty, having thee to fill it.

*Charles Lamb*

Miss Anne



I

WHEN I was a little fellow no higher than a hurdle,  
I was sent to a farm to get well.

It was a barren wasteful farm close to the sea,  
So near, that on rough nights the waves kept me awake.

## Her Infinite Variety

I used to hear them snarling and roaring, and scrunching  
the pebbles.

While the wind beat at the window, and knocked at the  
door, and rushed down the chimney to look for little  
boys.

And the waves grew hungrier and hungrier,  
Until it seemed that they were running along the sandy  
road, and in a minute we should all be swallowed  
up.

But in the morning everything was just the same,  
Because, as I was glad to think, the kind beach had kept  
the water back.

### II

All round the farm were wind-blown trees leaning  
piteously to the north :

Before the house was a low grey wall ragged with  
ferns,

And hart's-tongues grew in every ditch.

The fields were flat for miles and miles, but over there,  
far over there, was a high hill,

And its top, I thought, touched the sky.

### III

I was very happy at the farm—

Hunting for hens' eggs in fir-wood ;

Poking the pigs to make them grunt ;

Sitting astride the broad backs of the cart-horses ;

Watching Peter milk Bright-eye and Pansy in the warm  
cow-house ;

Waiting to see herons in the brooks ;

Picking windfalls from the long, wet grass of the orchard ;

Shooting at blackbirds with my bow and arrow ;

Staring with childhood's wondering gaze at Miss Anne.

## Characters

### IV

Poor Miss Anne !

I can see her now, with her sagging drab dress trailing in  
the dust,  
And the time-worn shawl over her fat shoulders,  
And her thick waist, and her grey hair—  
Carelessly knotted, so that stray always floated behind her,  
And her pale wandering eyes, unlit by the light of reason.

### V

Miss Anne was the soul of gentleness, yet somehow I was  
afraid of her.  
Often she would stop when she saw me, and smile wist-  
fully and very sweetly,  
And put out her hand to take mine,  
But I used always to run away.  
I wish now—when it is too late—that I had done her that  
small kindness.

### VI

No one took any notice of Miss Anne, only the animals,  
who loved her, and, I think, understood her.  
She drifted about the house—slowly, silently, shrinkingly.  
Sometimes we would see her grey head at the little attic  
window :  
Sometimes her round figure would fill the kitchen door-  
way (like a full-length by a Dutchman) ;  
Sometimes she stooped among the poultry and reproved  
their greed.

### VII

But if any one should want Miss Anne, there was one  
sure spot :  
Between the house and the orchard was a careless  
garden—



## Her Infinite Variety

Rosemary grew there, and Sweet-William, and Love-lies-a-bleeding ;  
The paths are between evening primroses and hollyhocks ;  
The beds were gay with gilly-flowers and thrift.  
In one corner the air was heavy with the scent of lavender ;  
And by the water-butt were fragrant herbs.  
At the end, where wall-flowers blazed in the mossy mortar,  
there was a well,  
And here Miss Anne would sit hour after hour,  
Here would she sit, in rain and shine, till her sister, the  
farmer's wife, led her away.

### VIII

Poor Miss Anne !  
Thus passed her inarticulate days as she moved through  
an atmosphere of negligence, knowing no human love.  
To-day, maybe, her joyless pilgrimage is nearly over,  
And she is bent and withered and white,  
And her pale blue eyes are dim. . . .  
But *my* Miss Anne can never grow old, never die, for I  
have her here in my heart :  
An immortal, sorrowful virgin, with grey head and a  
plaintive smile, and timid, out-stretched hand.  
Poor starved soul !

### IX

But when I think of Miss Anne now (and often I do), it  
is as I saw her on one misty morning.  
It was low tide, and I went down to the beach to  
paddle,  
And there I found Miss Anne.



## Characters

She was standing motionless on a little rock three stones' throw from the shore.

The yellow water was at her feet, and through the softening haze she looked majestic as Aphrodite.

A dozen seagulls wheeled about her head, and dunlins wept along the sand.

And there Miss Anne stood, of human beings the most solitary, gazing, gazing out to sea, searching, maybe, for that tenderness and understanding we denied her.







### X

I believe that she was truly happy at that moment,

I believe that Nature seemed to love her then :

For the gentle air kissed her head, and the murmuring wavelets kissed her feet, and the sea-mist wrapt her in sympathy.

*E. V. I.*

Meg Merrilees      

**O**LD Meg she was a gipsy,  
And liv'd upon the moors ;  
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,  
And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,  
Her currants pods o' broom ;  
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,  
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,  
Her sisters larchen trees—  
Alone with her great family  
She liv'd as she did please.

## Her Infinite Variety

No breakfast had she many a morn,  
No dinner many a noon ;  
And 'stead of supper she would stare  
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh  
She made her garlanding,  
And every night the dark glen yew  
She wove and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown  
She plaited mats o' rushes,  
And gave them to the cottagers  
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen  
And tall as Amazon.  
An old red blanket coat she wore ;  
A chip hat had she on.  
God rest her aged bones somewhere,  
She died full long ago !

*John Keats*

Good and Bad Luck    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

GOOD Luck is the gayest of all gay girls,  
Long in one place she will not stay,  
Back from your brow she strokes the curls,  
Kisses you quick and flies away.

But Madame Bad Luck soberly comes  
And stays,—no fancy has she for flitting,—  
Snatches of true love-songs she hums,  
And sits by your bed, and brings her knitting.

*John Hay (after Heine)*

## XXV

### FRIENDS OF THE COURTLY

The Queen of James I. of Scotland    ♪    ♪    ♪

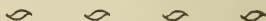
**O**F her array the form if I should write,  
 To wit her golden hair and rich attire  
 In fretwise trimmed and set with pearls so white  
 And balas rubies sparkling as the fire,  
 With many an emerald and fair sapphire ;  
 And on her head a chaplet fresh of hue,  
 Of Plumes part coloured red, and white, and blue ;  
 And full of quiv'ring spangles bright as gold,  
 Fashioned in shape like to the amorétts,  
 So new, so fresh, so pleasant to behold,  
 The plumes eke like unto the flow'r-jonétts,  
 Others were shaped like to the round crokétts,  
 Besides all this, there was, as well I wot,  
 Beauty enough to make a world to dote.  
 About her neck, white as the fire amaille,  
 A goodly chain of small orfevery,  
 Whereat there hung a ruby, without fail,  
 Like to a heart it shaped was verily,  
 That, as a spark of flame, so wantonly  
 Seemed burning bright upon her snowy throat ;  
 A partner good she'd make, full well I wot !

## Her Infinite Variety

In her was beauty, youth, and humble port,  
And bounty, riches, womanly factûre,  
God better wot than pen of mine report :  
Wisdom, largess, estate, discretion sure  
In ev'ry point so guided her mesûre,  
In word, in deed, in shape, in contenance,  
That nature could no more her child advance.

*James I. of Scotland*

### The Queen of Bohemia



YOU meaner beauties of the night,  
That poorly satisfy our eyes  
More by your number than your light ;  
You common people of the skies,  
What are you when the morn shall rise ?

You curious chanters of the wood,  
That warble forth Dame Nature's lays,  
Thinking your passions understood.  
By your weak accents ; what's your praise,  
When Philomel her voice should raise ?

You violets that first appear,  
By your pure purple mantles known  
Like the proud virgins of the year,  
As if the spring were all your own ;  
What are you when the rose is blown ?

So, when my mistress shall be seen  
In form and beauty of her mind,  
By virtue first, then choice a queen,  
Tell me if she were not designed  
The eclipse and glory of her kind ?

*Sir Henry Wotton*

## Friends of the Courtly

Lady Jane Maitland    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**L**IKE to the garden's eye, the flower of flowr's  
With purple pomp that dazzle doth the sight,  
Or as among the lesser gems of night,  
The usher of the planet of the hours,  
Sweet maid, thou shined'st on this world of ours,  
Of all perfections having trac'd the height :  
Thine outward frame was fair, fair inward powers,  
A sapphire lanthorn, and an incense light.  
Hence, the enamour'd heaven, as too, too good  
On earth's all-thorny soil long to abide,  
Transplanted to their fields so rare a bud,  
Wherefrom thy sun no cloud thee now can hide.  
Earth moan'd her loss, and wished she had the grace  
Not to have known, or known thee longer space.

*William Drummond of Hawthornden*

Lucy, Countess of Bedford    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**L**UCY, you brightnesse of our speare, who are  
Life of the Muses' day, their morning starre !  
If works (not th' author's) their own grace should look,  
Whose poemes would not wish to be your book ?  
But these, desir'd by you, the maker's ends  
Crown with their own : rare poems aske rare friends.  
Yet satires, since the most of mankind be  
Their un-avoided subjects, fewest see :  
For none e'er tooke that pleasure in sin's sense,  
But, when they heard it tax'd, took more offence.  
They, then, that living where the matter's bred,  
Dare for these poems yet both aske and read,

## Her Infinite Variety

And like them too ; must needfully, though few,  
Be of the best ; and 'mongst those best are you ;  
Lucy, you brightnesse of our speare, who are  
The Muses' evening, as their morning-starre !

*Ben Jonson*

The Countesse of Anglesea



**O** WHITHER do you lead the fair  
And spicy daughter of the morn ?  
Those manacles of her soft hair,  
Princes, though free, would fain have worn.

What is her crime ? what has she done ?  
Did she, by breaking beauty, stay,  
Or from his course mislead the sun,  
So robbed your harvest of a day ?

Or did her voice, divinely clear,  
(Since lately in your forest bred)  
Make all the trees dance after her,  
And so your woods disforested ?

Run, run ! pursue this Gothic rout,  
Who rudely love in bondage keep :  
Sure all old lovers have the gout,  
The young are overwatch'd and sleep !

*Sir William Davenant*

Mary, Lady Wroth



**M**ADAME, had all antiquitie been lost,  
All history seal'd up, and fables crost  
That we had left us, nor by time, nor place,  
Least mention of a Nymph, a Muse, a Grace,

## Friends of the Courtly

But even their names were to be made anew,—  
Who could not but create them all from you?  
He, that but saw you wear the wheaten hat,  
Would call you more than Ceres, if not that :  
And, drest in shepherd's tire, who would not say  
You were the bright Enone, Flora, May?  
If dancing, all would cry the Idalian Queen  
Were leading forth the Graces on the greene.  
And, armed to the chase, go bare her bow,  
Diana alone so hit, and hunted so.  
There's none so dull, that for your style would aske,  
That saw you put on Pallas' plumèd caske :  
Or, keeping your due state, that would not cry,  
There Juno sate, and yet no peacock by.  
So are you Nature's index, and restore,  
In your selfe, all treasure lost of th' age before.

*Ben Jonson*

Lady S —    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THE harmony of colours, features, grace,  
Resulting airs (the magic of a face)  
Of musical sweet tunes, all which combin'd  
To crown one sovereign beauty, lie confin'd  
To thy dark vault : she was a cabinet  
Where all the choicest stones of price were set ;  
Whose native colour and pure lustre lent  
Her eye, cheek, lip, a dazzling ornament ;  
Whose rare and hidden virtues did express  
Her inward beauties and mind's fairer dress :  
The constant diamond, the wise chrysolite,  
The devout sapphire, em'rald apt to write  
Records of mem'ry, cheerful agate, grave  
And serious onyx, topaz that doth save

## Her Infinite Variety

The brain's calm temper, witty amethyst ;  
This precious quarry, or what else the list  
On Aaron's ephod planted had, she wore ;  
One only pearl was wanting to her store :  
Which in her Saviour's book she found exprest ;  
To purchase that, she sold Death all the rest.

*Thomas Carew*

The Lady Elizabeth Hastings    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

### I

METHINKS, I now see her walking in her garden like our first parent, with unaffected charms, before beauty had spectators, and bearing celestial conscious virtue in her aspect. Her countenance is the lively picture of her mind, which is the seat of honour, truth, compassion, knowledge, and innocence.

There dwells the scorn of vice, and pity too. In the midst of the most ample fortune, and veneration of all that behold and know her, without the least affectation she consults retirement, the contemplation of her own being, and that Supreme Power which bestowed it. Without the learning of schools, or knowledge of a long course of arguments, she goes on in a steady course of uninterrupted piety and virtue, and adds to the severity and privacy of the last age all the freedom and ease of this. The language and mien of a court she is possessed of in the highest degree ; but the simplicity and humble thoughts of a cottage are her more welcome entertainments. Aspasia is a female philosopher, who does not only live up to the resignation of the most retired lives of the ancient sages, but also to the schemes and plans which they thought beautiful, though inimitable. This



## Friends of the Courtly

lady is the most exact economist, without appearing busy ; the most strictly virtuous without tasting the praise of it ; and shuns applause with as much industry as others do reproach. This character is so particular, that it will very easily be fixed on her only by all that know her ; but I dare say, she will be the last that finds it out.

*William Congreve*

### II

TO love her was a liberal education.

*Richard Steele*

How am I like Her?    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

" You are very like her."

*Miss H. E.*

" Resemblances begin to strike  
In things exceedingly unlike."

*MS. Poem*

HOW am I like her?—for no trace  
Of pain, of passion, or of aught  
That stings or stains, is on her face :  
Mild eyes, clear forehead,—ne'er was wrought  
A fitter, fairer dwelling-place  
For tranquil joy and holy thought.

How am I like her?—for the fawn  
Not lighter bounds o'er rock and rill  
Than she, beneath the intruding dawn  
Threading, all mirth, our gay quadrille ;  
Or tripping o'er our level lawn  
To those she loves upon the hill.

## Her Infinite Variety

How am I like her?—for the ear  
Thrills with her voice. Its breezy tone  
Goes forth, as eloquently clear  
As are the lutes at Heaven's high throne ;  
And makes the hearts of those who hear  
As pure and peaceful as her own.

How am I like her?—for her ways  
Are full of bliss—she never knew  
Stern avarice, nor the thirst of praise  
Insatiable :—Love never threw  
Upon her calm and sunny days  
The venom of his deadly dew.

How am I like her?—for her arts  
Are blessing—Sorrow owns her thrall ;  
She dries the tear-drop as it starts,  
And checks the murmurs as they fall ;  
She is the day-star of our hearts,  
Consoling, guiding, gladdening all.

How am I like her?—for she steals  
All sympathies—glad childhood's play  
Is left for her ; and mild youth kneels  
Obedient to her gentle sway ;  
And age beholds her smile, and feels  
December brightening into May.

How am I like her?—The rude fir  
Is little like the sweet rose-tree :—  
Unless, perchance, fair flatterer,  
In this your fabled likeness be,—  
That all who are most dear to her  
Are apt to be most dear to me.

*Winthrop M. Praed*

## Friends of the Courtly

Mrs. Biddy Floyd      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

("The Receipt to form a Beauty")

WHEN Cupid did his grandsire Jove entreat  
To form some Beauty by a new receipt,  
Jove sent, and found, far in a country scene,  
Truth, innocence, good nature, look serene :  
From which ingredients first the dext'rous boy  
Pick'd the demure, the awkward, and the coy.  
The Graces from the Court did next provide  
Breeding, and wit, and air, and decent pride :  
These Venus cleans from every spurious grain  
Of nice coquet, affected, pert, and vain.  
Jove mix'd up all, and the best clay employ'd ;  
Then call'd the happy composition FLOYD.

*Dean Swift*

Belinda      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪      ♪

BELINDA smil'd, and all the world was gay.  
*A. Pope*

## XXVI

### SAINTS

The Virgin Mary



#### I

THERE was a thief that often stole, but he had always great devotion to the Virgin Mary, and saluted her oft. It was so that on a time he was taken and judged to be hanged. And when he was hanged the Blessed Virgin sustained and hanged him up with her hands three days that he died not ne had no hurt, and they that hanged him passed by adventure thereby, and found him living and of glad cheer.

And then they supposed that the cord had not been well strained, and would have slain him with a sword, or have cut his throat, but our Blessed Lady set on her hand tofore the strokes, so that they might not slay him ne grieve him ; and then knew they by that he told to them that the Blessed Mother of God helped him, and then they marvelled, and took him off and let him go, in the honour of the Virgin Mary, and then he went and entered into a monastery, and was in the service of the Mother of God as long as he lived.

## Saints

### II

THERE was a priest of a parish, which was of honest and good life, and could say no mass but mass of our Lady, the which he sang devoutly in the honour of her, wherefore he was accused to face the bishop, and was anon called tofore him. And the priest confessed that he could say none other mass, wherefore the bishop reproved him sore as uncommon and an idiot, and suspended him of his mass, that he should no more sing none from thenforthon. And then our Blessed Lady appeared to the bishop and blamed him much because he had so entreated her chaplain, and said to him that he should die within thirty days, if he re-established him not again to this office accustomed. Then the bishop was afeard, and sent for the priest and prayed him of forgiveness, and bade him that he should not sing but of our Lady.

### III

THERE was a clerk which was vain and riotous, but always he loved much Our Lady, the Mother of God, and said every day his hours. And he saw on a night a vision that he was in judgment tofore our Lord, and our Lord said to them that were there : What judgment shall we do of this clerk? devise ye it for I have long suffered him, and see no sign yet of amendment. Then our Lord gave him sentence of damnation, and all they approved it. Then arose the Blessed Virgin and said to her son : “ I pray thee, debonair son, of thy mercy for this man, so that thou assuage upon him the sentence of damnation, and that he may live yet, by the grace of me, which is condemned to death by his merits.” And our Lord said to her : “ I deliver him at thy request, for to know if I shall see his correction.” Then our Lady turned

## Her Infinite Variety

her toward him and said: "Go, and sin no more lest it happen worse to thee." Then he awoke, and changed his life, and entered into religion, and finished his life in good works.

*William Caxton*

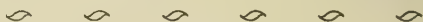
Saint Edburgh



IT is reported of her (forgive me, Reader, though I would not write these things they are so absurd, I cannot but write them they are so absurd) that she would by night play the part of a *Pious Thief*, and steal the socks of all the other Nuns, and, having carefully washed and anointed them, restore them to their beds sides.

*Thomas Fuller*

Saint Zita



FOR SAINT ZITA, the good kitchen-maid ;  
She prayed, and she prayed, and she prayed, and  
she prayed ;

One morning she got so absorbed in her prayers,  
She simply neglected her household affairs.  
Too late she remembered 'twas bread making day,  
And she trembled to think what her mistress would say.  
She flew to the oven, looked in it, and cried,  
"Glory be to the LORD ! the bread's ready inside !"  
The Angels had kneaded it, raised it with yeast,  
Made the fire, put the pans in the oven—at least  
I can only suppose that was how it was done,  
For the bread was all baked by a quarter to one.  
To pray like Saint Zita, but not to be late,  
Is the way to be good, and (if possible) great.

*Reginald Balfour*

## Saints

Saint Cecilia    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**C**ECILIA is as much to say as the lily of heaven, or a way to blind men. Or she is said of celo and lia, or else cecilia, as lacking blindness. Or she is said of celo, that is heaven, and leos, that is people. She was a heavenly lily by cleanness of virginity, a way to blind men by information of example, heaven by devout contemplation, lia by busy operation, lacking blindness by showing of wisdom, and heaven of the people.

For the people beheld in her as in following the spiritual heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars, that is to say, shining of wisdom, magnanimity of faith, and diversity of virtues. Or she is said a lily, for she had the whiteness of cleanness, a good conscience, and odour of good fame. Or she is said heaven, for Isidore saith that the philosophers say that heaven is moveable, round and burning. In likewise was she moving by busy operation, round by perseverance, and burning by fiery charity.

*William Caxton*

Saint Elizabeth    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

**E**LIZABETH was daughter of the noble King of Hungary, and was of noble lineage, but she was more noble by her faith and religion than by her right noble lineage ; she was right noble by example, she shone by miracle, and she was fair by grace of holiness, for the author of nature enhanced her in a manner above nature, when this holy maid was nourished in delices royal she renounced all childishness, and set herself all in the service of God. Then it appeared clearly as

## Her Infinite Variety

her tender infancy enforced in simpless, and began to use good customs from then forthon, and to despise the plays of the world, and of vanities, and flee the prosperities of the world, and always to profit in the honour of God. For when she was yet but five years old she abode so ententively in the church for to pray, that her fellows or her chamberers might unnethe bring her thence, and when she met any of her chamberers or fellows, that she would follow them toward the chapel as it were for to play, for to have cause to enter into the church. And when she was entered, anon she kneeled down and lay down to the earth, howbeit that she knew not yet any letters ; and she opened oft the psalter tofore her in the church for to feign that she read, because she should not be let, and that she should be seen occupied.

And when she was with other maidens for to play, she considered well the manner of the game for to give always honour to God under occasion, and in play of rings and other games she set all her hope in God. And of all that she won and had of any part profit when she was a young maid, she gave the tenth to the poor maidens, and led them oftentimes with her for to say paternoster or for to salute Our Lady. And like as she grew in age by time so grew she by devotion, for she choose the Blessed Virgin to be her Lady and her Advocate, and S. John the Evangelist to be warden of her Virginitie. . . .

She went not gladly to Karols, but withdrew other maidens from them. She doubted alway to wear jolly clothing, but she used always to have them honest. She had ordained to say every day a certain number of orisons and prayers, and if she were occupied in any manner that she might not perform them, but that she was constrained of her chamberers to go to her bed, she would there say them, waking.



## Saints

This holy virgin honoured all the solemn feasts of the year with so great reverence that she would not suffer her sleeves to be laced till the solemnity of the mass was accomplished, and she heard the office of the mass with so great reverence that when the gospel was read and the Sacrament was lifted up, she would take off her brooches of gold and the adornments on her head, as circles or chaplets, and lay them down. . . .

She gave on a time to a poor woman a right good vesture, and when this woman saw that she had so noble a gift, she had so great joy that she fell down as dead, and when the blessed Elizabeth saw that, she was sorry that she had given to her so noble a gift, and doubted **that** she was the cause of her death, and prayed for her, and anon she arose all whole. And she span oft wool with her chamberer and made thereof cloth, so that of her proper labour that she gave to the church, she received glorious fruit, and gave good ensample unto others. . . .

When the time approached that God had ordained, that she which had despised the reign mortal should have the reign of angels, she lay sick of the fever and turned her to the wall, and they that were there heard her put out a sweet melody ; and when one of the chamberers had enquired of her what it was, she answered and said : A bird came between me and the wall and sang so sweetly that it provoked me to sing with it. She was always in her malady glad and jocund, and ne ceased of prayer. The last day tofore her departing, she said to her chamberers : What will you do if the devil come to you ? And after a little while she cried with a high voice : Flee ! flee ! flee ! like she had chased away the devil ; and after, she said : The midnight approacheth in which Jesu Christ was born ; it is now time that God calls his

## Her Infinite Variety

friends to his heavenly weddings. And this, the year of our Lord twelve hundred and thirty-one, she gave up her spirit and slept in our Lord. . . .

Then there was heard and seen a multitude of birds, so many that there had not been seen the like tofore, into the church, and began a song of right great melody, like as it had been the obsequies of her, and their song was *Regnum Mundi*, which is sung in the praising of virgins.

*William Caxton*

## XXVII

### IMMORTAL SISTERS

Mary Lamb    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

BRIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness ; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as “with a difference.” We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood than expressed ; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the

## Her Infinite Variety

progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—the oddities of authorship, please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of anything that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She “holds Nature more clever.” I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the *Religio Medici*; but she must apologise to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favourite of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original brained, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems, but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances, it turns out that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done or let alone; whatever heat of opposition or

## Immortal Sisters

steadiness of conviction I set out with, I am sure always, in the long-run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company : at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly ; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.






Her education in youth was not much attended to ; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it, but I can answer for it that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter ; but in the teasing accidents and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the

## Her Infinite Variety

pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at play with, or upon a visit ; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

*Charles Lamb*

Dorothy Wordsworth     

### I

I KNEW a maid,  
A young enthusiast. . . .

Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field  
Could they have known her, would have loved ;  
methought

Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,  
That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,  
And everything she looked on, should have had  
An intimation how she bore herself  
Towards them, and to all creatures. God delights  
In such a being ; for her common thoughts  
Are piety, her life is gratitude.

### II

SHE gave me eyes, she gave me ears,  
And humble cares, and delicate fears ;  
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,  
And love, and thought, and joy.

*W. Wordsworth*





### III

WORDSWORTH and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed—in mind, I mean, and in heart ; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her ordinary ; if

## Immortal Sisters

you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty ; but her manners are simple, ardent, and impressive. In every motion her innocent soul outbeams so brightly that who saw her would say, "Guilt was a thing impossible to her." Her information various, her life watchful in minutest observation of nature ; and her taste a perfect electrometer.

*S. T. Coleridge*

Eugénie de Guérin                    

**E**UGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN was born in 1805, at the Château of Le Cayla, in Languedoc. Her family, though reduced in circumstances, was noble ; and even when one is a saint one cannot quite forget that one comes of the stock of the Guarini of Italy, or that one counts among one's ancestors a Bishop of Senlis, who had the marshalling of the French order of battle on the day of Bouvines.

Le Cayla was a solitary place, with its terrace looking down upon a stream-bed and valley ; "one may pass days there without seeing any living thing but the sheep, without hearing any living thing but the birds." M. de Guérin, Eugénie's father, lost his wife when Eugénie was thirteen years old, and Maurice seven ; he was left with four children—Eugénie, Marie, Erembert, and Maurice, was the youngest. This youngest child, whose beauty and delicacy had made him the object of his mother's most anxious fondness, was commended by her in dying to the care of his sister Eugénie. . . .

Mdlle. de Guérin is not one of these Saints arrived at perfect sweetness and calm, steeped in ecstasy ; there is something primitive, indomitable in her, which she

## Her Infinite Variety

governs, indeed, but which chafes, which revolts. Somewhere in the depths of that strong nature there is a struggle, and impatience, an inquietude, an ennui, which endures to the end, and which leaves one, when one finally closes her journal, with an impression of profound melancholy.

"There are days," she writes to her brother, "when one's nature rolls itself up, and becomes a hedgehog. If I had you here at this moment, here close by me, how I should prick you ! how sharp and hard !"

"Poor soul, poor soul," she cries out to herself another day, "what is the matter, what would you have ?"

Where is that which will do you good ? Everything is green, everything is in bloom, all the air has a breath of flowers. How beautiful it is ! Well, I will go out. No, I should be alone, and all this beauty, when one is alone, is worth nothing. What shall I do then ? Read, write, pray, take a basket of sand on my head like that hermit-saint, and walk with it ? Yes, work, work ! Keep busy the body which does mischief to the soul ! I have been too little occupied to-day, and that is bad for one, and it gives a certain ennui which I have in me time to ferment. . . ."

They [Maurice and Eugénie] were knit together, not only by the tie of blood and early attachment, but also by the tie of a common genius. "We were," says Eugénie, "two eyes looking out of one head." She, on her part, brought to her love for her brother the devotedness of a woman, the intensity of a recluse, almost the solicitude of a mother.

Her home duties prevented her from following the wish, which often arose in her, to join a religious sisterhood. There is a trace—just a trace—of an early attachment to a cousin ; but he died when she was



## Immortal Sisters

twenty-four. After that, she lived for Maurice. It was for Maurice that, in addition to her constant correspondence with him by letter, she began in 1834 her journal which was sent to him by portions as it was finished. After his death she tried to continue it, addressing it to "Maurice in heaven." But the effort was beyond her strength ; gradually the entries became rarer and rarer ; and on the last day of December 1840 the pen dropped from her hand : the journal ends.

*Matthew Arnold*

## XXVIII

### AUNTS AND GRANDMOTHERS

Auntie    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

CHIEF of our Aunts—not only I,  
But all your dozen of nurslings cry—  
What did the other children do,  
And what were childhood, wanting you?

*R. L. Stevenson*

Aunt Caroline    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

AUNT CAROLINE was Beauty's queen,  
A very volatile Althea,  
When Russell split with Aberdeen  
And Raglan died in the Crimea ;  
She watched the great Duke's funeral pass,  
Heard the drums roll, the cannon thunder ;  
She walked in Paxton's house of glass,  
And saw the marvels ranged thereunder.

Her days of girlhood and quadrilles,  
That poetry of old-fashioned motion,  
Were days when from the Punjaub hills  
Came honours mailed across the ocean ;

## Aunts and Grandmothers

When India shuddered at the shock,  
And peaceful men, turned raving jingoes,  
Spoke with white lips of Havelock,  
Or Hodson and his bold Flamingoes.

When of dramatic things she tells,  
What heroes of the stage assemble !  
She saw Phelps play at Sadler's Wells,  
She saw Charles Kean and Fanny Kemble ;  
The Opera-House she still connects  
With Mario and *Il Trovatore*,  
And quite distinctly recollects  
The Swedish Nightingale furore.

Though once she might her voice have raised  
Against this accurate reminder  
Of dated history which appraised  
The years that she had left behind her ;  
Now when her good grey hairs confess  
The nonsense of evasion clearly,  
Admitting sixty more or less,  
She loves a reminiscence, dearly.

Not that in truth she seems inclined  
To yield to Time's advancing forces,  
For strong alike in limb and mind,  
Alive with interest and resources,  
She stands, a product of the reign,  
Without a sign of flaw or fracture,  
Reflecting credit, I maintain,  
Upon Victorian manufacture.

That worthy age of green and gilt,  
Less picturesque perhaps than solid,  
For all its queer æsthetic built  
Its women, like its sofas, solid ;

## Her Infinite Variety

So with her brisk and active air,  
And upright as a wand of willow,  
She shows as little wear and tear  
As any sideboard made by Gillow.

Myself, in youth's enchanted dawn,  
When days were long and suns were warmer,  
Recall upon the croquet lawn  
Aunt Caroline no mean performer ;  
In royal fight she would engage,  
Sure was her hand and few her errors,  
For her it seemed as though the cage  
Had lost its customary terrors.

As I remember her, with locks  
Sedately coiled and neatly plaited,  
Wearing the fullest-flounced of frocks,  
Prunella-shod or pork-pie-hatted,  
She might have been designed by Leech,  
Or stepped from one of Trollope's pages,  
One who had charmed with sparkling speech  
His Barset potentates and sages.

She flouted the lawn-tennis craze,  
Nor talked of services and volleys,  
Though none observes with friendlier gaze  
A newer generation's follies ;  
And when the bicycle in turn  
Came to assert its fascination,  
She used to vow that she would learn  
Upon the smallest provocation.

She lives in a Cathedral town,  
Where, ruler of the small society,  
Tea-parties, trembling at her frown,  
Reflect her views about propriety ;

## Aunts and Grandmothers

And there she wags her kindly tongue  
Beneath the shadow of the Minster,  
The ever old, the ever young,  
A picture of the lively spinster.

Sometimes, in sentimental mood,  
A merry hint or two she proffers  
Of swains who sighed and swains who wooed,  
And made her eligible offers ;  
She heard their flatteries at her ease,  
She saw her girl companions marry,  
But she was hard, she says, to please,  
And none could captivate Aunt Carrie.

Well, in her time she may have thrown  
Hopes to the ground in doleful pieces,  
Yet this capricious wind has blown  
Good to her nephews and her nieces ;  
For whom her love is ever sure  
And faithful, as befits her gender,  
Strong to appreciate and endure,  
Always considerate, always tender.

*Alfred Cochran*

Old Aunt Mary



YOU who have journeyed the wide world through—  
Knowing the Old World as the New,—  
Cruise or pilgrimage or shrine,  
Found you ever so all-divine  
A haven as first was yours and mine  
Out to old Aunt Mary's?

Wasn't it pleasant, O brother mine,  
In those old days of the lost sunshine

## Her Infinite Variety

Of youth—when the Saturday's chores were through,  
And the "Sunday wood" in the kitchen, too,  
And we went visiting "me and you,"  
Out to old Aunt Mary's?

"Me and you"—and the morning fair,  
With the dewdrops twinkling everywhere ;  
The scent of the cherry-blossoms blown  
After us, in the roadway lone,  
Our capering shadows onward thrown—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's !

It all comes back so clear to-day !  
Though I am as bald as you are gray,—  
Out by the barn-lot, and down the lane,  
We patter along in the dust again,  
As light as the tips of the drops of the rain,  
Out to old Aunt Mary's ! . . .

Why, I see her now in the open door,  
Where the little gourds grew up the sides and o'er  
The clapboard roof !—And her face—ah, me !  
Wasn't it good for a boy to see—  
And wasn't it good for a boy to be  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

The jelly, the jam, and the marmalade,  
And the cherry and quince "preserves" she made !  
And the sweet-sour pickles of peach and pear,  
With cinnamon in 'em, and all things rare !—  
And the more we ate was the more to spare,  
Out to old Aunt Mary's !

Ah ! was there, ever, so kind a face  
And gentle as hers, or such a grace

## Aunts and Grandmothers

Of welcoming, as she cut the cake  
Or the juicy pies that she joyed to make  
Just for the visiting children's sake—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

The honey, too, in its amber comb  
One only finds in an old farm-home ;  
And the coffee, fragrant and sweet, and ho !  
So hot that we gloried to drink it so,  
With spangles of tears in our eyes, you know—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

And the romps we took, in our glad unrest !—  
Was it the lawn that we loved the best,  
With its swooping swing in the locust trees,  
Or was it the grove, with its leafy breeze,  
Or the dim hay-mow, with its fragrances—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

Far fields, bottom-lands, creek-banks—all,  
We ranged at will.—Where the waterfall  
Laughed all day as it slowly poured  
Over the dam by the old mill-ford,  
While the tail-race writhed, and the mill-wheel  
roared—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

But home, with Aunty in nearer call,  
That was the best place, after all !—  
The talks on the back-porch, in the low  
Slanting sun and the evening glow,  
With the voice of counsel that touched us so,  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

And then, in the garden—near the side  
Where the bee-hives were and the path was wide,—

## Her Infinite Variety

The apple-house—like a fairy cell—  
With the little square door we knew so well,  
And the wealth inside : but our tongues could tell—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

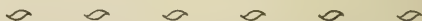
And the old spring-house in the cool green gloom  
Of the willow trees,—and the cooler room  
Where the swinging-shelves and the crocks were kept,  
Where the cream in a golden languor slept,  
While the waters gurgled and laughed and wept—  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

And as many a time have you and I—  
Barefoot boys in the days gone by—  
Knelt, and in tremulous ecstasies  
Dipped our lips into sweets like these,—  
Memory now is on her knees  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.—

And O, my brother, so far away,  
This is to tell you, she waits *to-day*  
To welcome us :—Aunt Mary fell  
Asleep this morning, whispering—" Tell  
The boys to come !" . . . And all is well  
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

*James Whitcomb Riley*

The Aunt



NEXT, the dear Aunt, whose smile of cheer  
And voice in dreams I see and hear,—  
The sweetest woman ever Fate  
Perverse denied a household mate,  
Who, lonely homeless, not the less  
Found peace in love's unselfishness,



## Aunts and Grandmothers

And welcome wheresoe'er she went,  
A calm and gracious element,  
Whose presence seemed the sweet income  
And womanly atmosphere of home,—  
Called up her girlhood memories,  
The huskings and the apple-bees,  
The sleigh-rides, and the summer-sails,  
Weaving through all the poor details  
And homespun warp of circumstance  
A golden woof-thread of romance,  
For well she kept her genial mood  
And simple faith of maidenhood ;  
Before her still a cloud-land lay,  
The mirage loomed across her way ;  
The morning dew, that dries so soon  
With others, glistened at her noon ;  
Through years of toil and soil and care,  
From glossy tress to thin grey hair,  
All unprofaned she held apart  
The virgin fancies of her heart,  
Be shame to him of woman born  
Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

*J. G. Whittier*

Aunt Anne    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

AUNT ANNE was slight and old, nearly sixty perhaps. All over her face there were little lines that crossed and re-crossed, and branched off in every direction. She had grey hair, and small dark eyes that blinked quickly and nervously ; there appeared to be some trifling affection of the left eye, for now and then, as if by accident, it winked at you. The odd thing was that, in spite of her evident tendency to nervous excite-

## Her Infinite Variety

ment, her shabby black satin dress, almost threadbare shawl, and cheap gloves, there was an air of dignity about the spare old lady, and something like determination in her kindly voice that, joined to her impulsive tenderness, made you quickly understand she would be a very difficult person to oppose.

"Dear boy," she said gently to Walter, "why didn't you write to me when you were married? you know how glad I should have been to hear of your happiness."

"Why didn't you write to me, Aunt Anne?" he asked, gaily turning the tables.

"Yes, I ought to have done so. You must forgive me, dears, for being so remiss," she answered, looking at them both, "and believe me that it was from no lack of affection. But," she went on quickly, "we must not waste our time. You are coming to Rottingdean with me, and at once. Mr. Baines is longing to see you both."

"But we can't go now, Aunt Anne," Walter declared in his kindest manner; "we must get back to the lodgings. We told them to have luncheon ready at one o'clock, and to-night we go home. You must come and lunch with us."

"That is impossible, dear Walter; you are coming back with me."

"It can't be done to-day," he said regretfully.

"My dear Walter," she answered, with a look of dismay and in a voice that was almost pained, "what would your uncle say if he heard you? I could not possibly return without you."

"But he has never seen me, Aunt Anne."

"That is one reason why he would never forgive me if I did not take you back."

"But it is so far, and we should be all day getting

## Aunts and Grandmothers

there," Walter objected a little helplessly, for he felt already that Aunt Anne would carry her point.

"It is only to Rottingdean"—she spoke with hurt surprise—"and we will drive. I saw a beautiful fly as I was coming on to the pier, and engaged it. I know you too well, my darling, to think that you will refuse me."

Her manner had changed in a moment ; she said the last words with soft triumph, and looked at Florence. The sight of the young wife seemed to be too much for her ; there was something like a tear in the left eye, the one that winked, when she spoke again.

"I must give her a kiss," she said tenderly, and putting out her arms she gathered the girl to her heart. "But we must make haste," she added quickly, hurrying over the fag end of her embrace, as if she had not time to indulge in her feelings much as she desired to do so. "Mr. Baines will wonder what has happened to us. He is longing to see you ;" and without their knowing it, she almost chased them along the pier.

*Mrs. W. K. Clifford*

Granny

GRANNY'S come to our house,  
And ho ! my lawzy-daisy !  
All the children round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy !  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny !

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,  
And Wade and Silas Walker

## Her Infinite Variety

Both's a-ridin' on her foot,  
And 'Pollo's on the rocker ;  
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marin's,  
And little orphant Anny,  
All's a-eatin' ginger bread  
And giggle-un at Granny !

Tells us all the fairy tales  
Ever thought er wundered—  
And 'bundance o' other stories—  
Bet she knows a hunderd !—  
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"  
And "Golden Locks" for Fanny !  
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,  
Listenin' at Granny !

"Jack the Giant-killer" 's good,  
And "Bean Stalk" 's another !—  
So's the one of "Cinderell',"  
And her old godmother ;—  
That un's best of all the rest—  
Bestest one of any—  
Where the mices scampers home  
Like we runs to Granny.

Granny's come to our house,  
Ho ! my lawzy-daisy !  
All the children round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy !  
Fetch'd a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetch'd a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetch'd a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny !

*James Whitcomb Riley*

## Aunts and Grandmothers

### Grammer's Shoes



I DO seem to zee Grammer as she did use  
Vor to show us, at Chris'mas, her weddèn shoes,  
An' her flat spreadèn bonnet so big an' roun'  
As a girt pewter dish a-turn'd upside down ;  
When we all did draw near  
In a cluster to hear,  
O' the merry wold soul, how she did use  
To walk an' dance wi' her high-heel shoes.

She'd a gown wi' girt flowers lik' hollyhocks,  
An zome stockèns o' Gramfer's a-knit wi' clocks,  
An' a token she kept under lock an' key,—  
A small lock ov his heäir off avore 't wer grey.  
An' her eyes were red,  
An' she shook her head,  
When we'd all a-look'd at it, an' she did use  
To lock it away wi' her weddèn shoes.

She could tell us such teäles about heavy snows,  
An' o' rains an' o' floods when the water rose  
All up into the housen, an' carr'd away  
All the bridge wi' a man an' his little bwoy ;  
An' o' vog an' vrost,  
An' o' vók a-lost,  
An' o' peärties at Chris'mas, when she did use  
Vor to walk whome wi' Gramfer in high-heel shoes.

Ev'ry Chris'mas she lik'd vor the bells to ring,  
An' to have in the zingers to hear 'em zing  
The wold carols she heärd many years a-gone,  
While she warm'd 'em zome cider avore the bron' ;

## Her Infinite Variety

An' she'd look an' smile  
At our dancèn, while  
She did tell how her friends now a-gone did use  
To reely wi' her in their high-heel shoes.

Ah ! an' how she did like vor to deck wi' red  
Holly-berries the window an' wold clock's head,  
An' the clavy wi' boughs o' some bright green leaves,  
An' to meäke twoast an' eäle upon Chris'mas eves.

But she's now, drough greäce,  
In a better pleäce,  
Though we'll never vorget her, poor soul, nor lose  
Gramfer's token ov heäir, nor her weddèn shoes.

*William Barnes*

My Grandmother



(Suggested by a Picture by Romney)

THIS relative of mine,  
Was she seventy-and-nine  
When she died?  
By the canvas may be seen  
How she look'd at seventeen,  
As a Bride.

Beneath a summer tree,  
Her maiden reverie  
Has a charm ;  
Her ringlets are in taste ;  
What an arm ! . . . what a waist  
For an arm !

## Aunts and Grandmothers

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,  
Lace farthingale, and gay

*Falbalà,—*

Were Romney's limning true,  
What a lucky dog were you,  
Grandpapa !

Her lips are sweet as love ;  
They are parting ! Do they move ?  
Are they dumb ?  
Her eyes are blue, and beam  
Beseechingly, and seem  
To say, "Come !"

What funny fancy slips  
From atween these cherry lips !  
Whisper me,  
Sweet Sorceress in paint,  
What canon says I mayn't  
Marry thee ?

That good-for-nothing Time  
Has a confidence sublime !  
When I first  
Saw this lady, in my youth,  
Her winters had, forsooth,  
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,  
Once shamed the swarthy crow ;  
By-and-by  
That fowl's avenging sprite  
Set his cruel foot for spite  
Near her eye.

## Her Infinite Variety

Her rounded form was lean  
And her silk was bombazine :  
    Well I wot  
With her needles would she sit,  
And for hours would she knit,—  
    Would she not ?

Ah perishable clay ;  
Her charms had dropt away  
    One by one :  
But if she heaved a sigh  
With a burthen, it was, "Thy  
    Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,  
With the fardel of her years  
    Overprest,  
In mercy she was borne  
Where the weary and the worn  
    Are at rest.

Oh if you now are there,  
*And sweet as once you were,*  
    Grandmamma,  
This nether world agrees  
'Twill all the better please  
    Grandpapa.

*Frederick Locker*

A Gentlewoman of the Old School    ♪    ♪    ♪

SHE lived in Georgian era too.  
Most women then, if bards be true,  
Succumbed to Routs and Cards, or grew  
    Devout and acid.



## Aunts and Grandmothers

But hers was neither fate. She came  
Of good west-country folk, whose fame  
Has faded now. For us her name  
Is "Madam Placid."

Patience or Prudence,—what you will,  
Some prefix faintly fragrant still  
As those old musky scents that fill  
Our grandams' pillows ;  
And for her youthful portrait take  
Some long-waist child of Hudson's make,  
Stiffly at ease beside a lake  
With swans and willows.

I keep her later semblance placed  
Beside my desk,—'tis lawned and laced,  
In shadowy sanguine stipple traced  
By Bartolozzi ;  
A placid face, in which surprise  
Is seldom seen, but yet there lies  
Some vestige of the laughing eyes  
Of arch Piozzi.

For her e'en Time grew debonair,  
He, finding cheeks unclaimed of care,  
With late-delayed faint roses there,  
And lingering dimples,  
Had spared to touch the fair old face,  
And only kissed with Vauxhall grace  
The soft white hand that stroked her lace,  
Or smoothed her wimples.

So left her beautiful. Her age  
Was comely as her youth was sage,  
And yet she once had been the rage ;—  
It hath been hinted,

## Her Infinite Variety

Indeed, affirmed by one or two,  
Some spark at Bath (as sparks will do)  
Inscribed a song to "Lovely Prue,"  
Which Urban printed.

I know she thought ; I know she felt ;  
Perchance could sum, I doubt she spelt,  
She knew as little of the Celt  
As of the Saxon ;  
I know she played and sang, for yet  
We keep the tumble-down spinet  
To which she quavered ballads set  
By Arne or Jackson.

Her tastes were not refined as ours ;  
She liked plain food and homely flowers,  
Refused to paint, kept early hours,  
Went clad demurely ;  
Her art was sampler-work design,  
Fireworks for her were "vastly fine,"  
Her luxury was elder-wine,  
She loved that "purely."

She was renowned, traditions say,  
For June conserves, for curds and whey,  
For finest tea (she called it "tay"),  
And ratafia ;  
She knew, for sprains, what bands to choose,  
Could tell the sovereign wash to use  
For freckles, and was learned in brews  
As erst Medea.

Yet studied little. She would read,  
On Sundays, "Pearson on the Creed,"  
Though, as I think, she could not heed  
His text profoundly ;

## Aunts and Grandmothers

Seeing she chose for her retreat  
The warm west-looking window-seat,  
Where, if you chanced to raise your feet  
    You slumbered soundly.

This, 'twixt ourselves. The dear old dame,  
In truth, was not so much to blame ;  
The excellent divine I name  
    Is scarcely stirring ;  
Her plain-song piety preferred  
Pure life to precept. If she erred,  
She knew her faults. Her softest word  
    Was for the erring.

If she had loved, or if she kept  
Some ancient memory green, or wept  
Over the shoulder-knot that slept  
    Within her cuff-box,  
I know not. Only this I know,  
At sixty-five she'd still her beau,  
A lean French exile, lame and slow,  
    With monstrous snuff-box.

Younger than she, well born and bred,  
She'd found him in St. Giles', half dead  
Of teaching French for nightly bed  
    And daily dinners ;  
Starving, in fact, 'twixt want and pride ;  
And so, henceforth, you always spied  
His rusty "pigeon-wings" beside  
    Her Mechlin pinnars.

He worshipped her, you may suppose.  
She gained him pupils, gave him clothes,  
Delighted in his dry bon-mots  
    And crackling laughter ;

## Her Infinite Variety

And when, at last, the long duet  
Of conversation and picquet  
Ceased with her death, of sheer regret  
He died soon after.

Dear Madam Placid ! Others knew  
Your worth as well as he, and threw  
Their flowers upon your coffin too,  
I take for granted.  
Their loves are lost ; but still we see  
Your kind and gracious memory  
Bloom yearly with the almond tree  
The Frenchman planted.

*Austin Dobson*

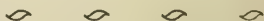
### Beautiful Women



WOMEN sit, or move to and fro, some old, some  
young,  
The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful  
than the young.

*Walt Whitman*

### Chaucer's Praise of Women



FOR this ye know well, tho' I wouldin lie,  
In women is all truth and steadfastness ;  
For in good faith, I never of them sie  
But much worship, bounty, and gentleness,  
Right coming, fair, and full of meekéness ;  
Good, and glad, and lowly, I you ensure,  
Is this goodly and angelic creature.

## Aunts and Grandmothers

And if it hap a man be in disease,  
She doth her business and her full pain,  
With all her might him to comfort and please,  
If fro his disease him she might restrain :  
In word ne deed, I wis, she woll not faine ;  
With all her might she doth her business  
To bringen him out of his heaviness.

Lo, here what gentleness these women have  
If we could know it for our rudéness !  
How busy they be us to keep and save  
Both in hele and also in sicknèss,  
And always right sorry for our distress !  
In evéry manere thus show they ruth,  
That in them is all goodness and all truth.

*Chaucer*

## XXIX

### THE TYRANTS

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough      ∩      ∩      ∩

OLD Marlborough is dying—but who can tell ! last year she had lain a great while ill, without speaking ; her physicians said, “She must be blistered, or she will die.” She called out, “I won’t be blistered, and I won’t die.” If she takes the same resolution now, I don’t believe she will.

*Horace Walpole*

Lady Cork      ∩      ∩      ∩      ∩      ∩      ∩

#### I

JOHNSON was prevailed with to come sometimes into these circles, and did not think himself too grave even for the lively Miss Monckton (now Countess of Cork), who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at the house of her mother, Lady Galway. Her vivacity enchanted the sage, and they used to talk together with all imaginable ease. A singular instance happened

## The Tyrants

one evening, when she insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetic. Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure," said she, "they have affected *me*." "Why," said Johnson, smiling, and rolling himself about, "that is, because, dearest, you're a dunce." When she some time afterwards mentioned this to him, he said, with equal truth and politeness, "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it."

*James Boswell*

### II

SHE was one of the most curious figures in the London Society of my girlish days. Very aged, yet retaining much of a vivacity of spirit and sprightly wit for which she had been famous as Mary Monckton, she continued till between ninety and a hundred years old to entertain her friends and the gay world, who frequently during the season assembled at her house.

I have still a note begging me to come to one of her evening parties, written under her dictation by a young person who used to live with her and whom she called her "memory"; the few concluding lines scrawled by herself are signed "M. Cork, æt. 92." She was rather apt to appeal to her friends to come to her on the score of her age; and I remember Rogers showing me an invitation he had received from her for one of the ancient concert evenings (these were musical entertainments of the highest order, which Mr. Rogers never failed to attend), couched in these terms: "Dear Rogers, leave the ancient music and come to ancient Cork, 93." Lady Cork's drawing-rooms were rather

## Her Infinite Variety

peculiar in their arrangements: they did not contain that very usual piece of furniture, a pianoforte, so that if she ever especially desired to have music she hired an instrument for the evening; the rest of the furniture consisted only of very large and handsome arm-chairs placed round the apartments against the walls, to which they were made fast by some mysterious process, so that it was quite impossible to form a small circle or coterie of one's own at one of her assemblies.

Lady Cork's great age did not appear to interfere with her enjoyment of society, in which she lived habitually. I remember a very comical conversation with her in which she was endeavouring to appoint some day for my dining with her, our various engagements appearing to clash. She took up the pocket-book where hers were inscribed, and began reading them out with the following running commentary: "Wednesday—no, Wednesday won't do; Lady Holland dines with me—naughty lady!—won't do, my dear. Thursday?" "Very sorry, Lady Cork, we are engaged." "Ah yes, so am I; let's see—Friday; no, Friday I have the Duchess of C——, another naughty lady; mustn't come then, my dear. Saturday?" "No, Lady Cork, I am very sorry—we are engaged to Lady D——." "Oh dear, oh dear! improper lady, too! but a long time ago, everybody's forgotten all about it,—very proper now! quite proper now!" . . .

The unfortunate propensity of poor Lady Cork to appropriate all sorts of things belonging to other people, valueless quite as often as valuable, was matter of public notoriety, so that the fashionable London tradesmen, to whom her infinity in this respect was well known, never allowed their goods to be taken to her carriage for inspection, but always exacted that she



## The Tyrants

should come into their shops, where an individual was immediately appointed to follow her about and watch her during the whole time she was making purchases.

*Fanny Kemble*

Mrs. Dundas    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THERE was a singular race of excellent Scotch old ladies. They were a delightful set ; strong-headed, warm-hearted, and high-spirited ; the fire of their tempers not always latent ; merry, even in solitude ; very resolute ; indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world ; and adhering to their own ways, so as to stand out, like primitive rocks, above ordinary Society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit were embodied in curious outsides ; for they all dressed and spoke and did exactly as they chose ; their language, their habits, entirely Scotch, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes taken for.

There sits a clergyman's widow, the mother of the first Sir David Dundas, the introducer of our German System of military manœuvres, and at one time Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. We used to go to her house in Bunker's Hill, when boys, on Sundays between the morning and afternoon sermons, where we were cherished with Scotch broth, and cakes, and many a joke from the old lady. Age had made her incapable of walking even across the room ; so, clad in a plain black silk gown, and a pure muslin cap, she sat half-encircled by a high-backed black leather chair, reading ; with silver spectacles stuck on her thin nose ; and interspersing her studies and her days with much laughter,

## Her Infinite Variety

and not a little sarcasm. What a spirit! There was more fun and sense round that chair than in the theatre or the church. I remember one of her grand-daughters stumbling, in the course of reading the newspaper to her, on a paragraph which stated that a lady's reputation had suffered from some indiscreet talk on the part of the Prince of Wales.

Up she of fourscore sat, and said with an indignant shake of her shrivelled fist, and a keen voice—"The damned villain! does he kiss and tell?"

*Lord Cockburn*

Lady Don and Mrs. Rothead of Inverleith      ∞      ∞

THEY had both shone, first as hooped beauties in the minuets, and then as ladies of ceremonies, at our stately assemblies; and each carried her peculiar qualities and air to the very edge of the grave; Lady Don's dignity softened by gentle sweetness, Mrs. Rothead's made more formidable by cold and rather severe solemnity.

Except Mrs. Siddons in some of her displays of magnificent royalty, nobody could sit down like the lady of Inverleith. She would sail, like a ship from Tarshish, gorgeous in velvet or rustling in silk, and done up in all the accompaniments of fan, ear-rings, and finger-rings, falling sleeves, scent bottle, embroidered bag, hoop and train—all superb, yet all in purest taste; and managing all this seemingly heavy rigging, with as much ease as a full-blown swan does its plumage, she would take possession of the centre of a large sofa, and at the same moment, without the slightest visible exertion, would cover the whole of it with her bravery,

## The Tyrants

the graceful folds seeming to lay themselves over it like summer waves.

The descent from her carriage, too, where she sat like a nautilus in its shell, was a display which no one in these days could accomplish or even fancy. The mulberry-coloured coach, spacious, but apparently not too large for what it carried—though she alone was in it; the handsome, jolly coachman and his splendid hammercloth loaded with lace; the two respectful liveried footmen, one on each side of the richly-carpeted step; these were lost sight of amidst the slow majesty with which the lady came down and touched the earth. She presided, in this imperial style, over her sons' excellent dinners, with great sense and spirit, to the very last day almost of a prolonged life.

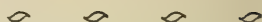
Lady Don (who lived in George Square) was still more highly bred, as was attested by her polite cheerfulness and easy elegance.

The venerable faded beauty, the white well-coiled hair, the soft hand sparkling with old brilliant rings, the kind heart, the affectionate manner, the honest, gentle voice, and the mild eye, account for the love with which her old age was surrounded. She was about the last person (so far as I recollect) in Edinburgh who kept a private sedan chair. Hers stood in the lobby, and was as handsome and comfortable as silk, velvet, and gilding could make it. And, when she wished to use it, the well-known, respectable chair-men, enveloped in her livery cloaks, were the envy of their brethren. She and Mrs. Rothead both sat in the Tron Church; and well do I remember how I used to form one of the cluster that always took its station to see these beautiful relics emerge from the coach and the chair.

*Lord Cockburn*

## Her Infinite Variety

### The Old Scottish Ladies



THIS is a masterly description of a race now all but passed away. I have known several of them in my early days ; and amongst them we must look for the racy Scottish peculiarities of diction and of expression which, with them, are also nearly gone. Lord Cockburn has given some illustrations of these peculiarities ; and I have heard others, especially connected with Jacobite partialities, of which I say nothing, as they are in fact rather *strong* for such an occasion as the present. One, however, I heard lately as coming from a Forfarshire old lady of this class, which bears upon the point of “ resolute ” determination referred to in Lord Cockburn’s description. She had been very positive in the disclaiming of some assertion which had been attributed to her, and on being asked if she had not written it, or something very like it, she replied, “ Na, na ; I never *write* onything of consequence—I may deny what I say, but I canna deny what I write.”

Mrs. Baird of Newbyth, the mother of our distinguished countryman the late General Sir David Baird, was always spoken of as a grand specimen of the class. When the news arrived from India of the gallant but unfortunate action of ’84 against Hyder Ali, in which her son, then Captain Baird, was engaged, it was stated that he and other officers had been taken prisoners and chained together two and two. The friends were careful in breaking such sad intelligence to the mother of Captain Baird. When, however, she was made fully to understand the position of her son and his gallant companions, disdaining all weak and useless expressions of her own grief, and knowing well the restless and athletic habits

## The Tyrants

of her son, all she said was, "Lord pity the chiel that's chained to our Davy."<sup>1</sup>

The ladies of this class had certainly no affectation in speaking of those who came under their displeasure, even when life and death were concerned. I had an anecdote illustrative of this characteristic, in a well-known old lady of the last century, Miss Johnstone of Westerhall. She had been extremely indignant that, on the death of her brother, his widow had proposed to sell off the old furniture of Westerhall. She was attached to it from old associations, and considered the parting with it little short of sacrilege. The event was, however, arrested by death, or, as she describes the result, "The furniture was a' to be roupit, and we couldna persuade her. But before the sale cam' on, in God's gude providence, she just clinkit aff hersell." Of this same Miss Johnstone, another characteristic anecdote has been preserved in the family. She came into possession of Hawkhill, near Edinburgh, and died there. When dying, a tremendous storm of rain and thunder came on, so as to shake the house. In her own quaint eccentric spirit, and with no thought of profane or light allusions, she looked up, and, listening to the storm, quietly remarked, in reference to her departure, "Ech, sirs ! what a night for me to be fleeing though the air !"

A recorded reply of old Lady Perth to a French gentleman is quaint and characteristic. They had been discussing the respective merits of the cookery of each country. The Frenchman offended the old Scottish peeress by some disparaging remarks on Scottish dishes,

<sup>1</sup> It is but due to the memory of "our Davy" to state that "the chiel" to whom he was chained, in writing home to his friends, bore high testimony to the kindness and consideration with which he was treated by Captain Baird.

## Her Infinite Variety

and by highly preferring those of France. All she would answer was, "Weel, weel, some fowk like parritch, and some like paddocks."<sup>1</sup>

*Dean Ramsay*

Miss MacNabb



ABOUT the beginning of the present century, the then Campbell, of Combie, on Loch Awe side, in Argyleshire, was a man of extraordinary character, and of great physical strength, and such swiftness of foot that it is said he could "catch the best *tup* on the hill." He also looked upon himself as a "pretty man," though in this he was singular; also, it was more than whispered that the laird was not remarkable for his principles of honesty. There also lived in the same district a Miss MacNabb of Bar-a'-Chaistril, a lady who, before she had passed the zenith of life, had never been remarkable for her beauty—the contrary even had passed into a proverb while she was in her teens; but, to counterbalance this defect in external qualities, nature had endowed her with great benevolence, while she was renowned for her probity. One day the Laird of Combie, who piqued himself on his *bon-mots*, was, as frequently happened, a guest of Miss MacNabb's, and after dinner several toasts had gone round as usual, Combie addressed his hostess, and requested an especial bumper, insisting on all the guests to fill to the brim. He then rose, and said, addressing himself to Miss MacNabb, "I propose the old Scottish toast of 'Honest men and *bonnie* lassies,'" and bowing to the hostess, he resumed his seat. The lady returned his bow with her usual amiable smile, and

<sup>1</sup> Frogs.

## The Tyrants

taking up her glass, replied, "Weel, Combie, I am sure *we* may drink that, for it will neither apply to *you* nor *me*."

Dean Ramsay

Miss Helen Carnegie    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

MISS HELEN CARNEGIE of Craigo was a thorough specimen of this class of old Scottish ladies. She lived in Montrose, and died in 1818, at the advanced age of 91. She was a Jacobite, and very aristocratic in her feelings, but on social terms with many burghers of Montrose, or Munross, as it was called. She preserved a very nice distinction of addresses, suited to different individuals in the town, according as she placed them in the scale of her consideration. She liked a party at quadrille, and sent out her servant every morning to invite the ladies required to make up the game, and her directions were graduated thus—"Nelly, ye'll ging to Lady Carnegie's and mak my compliments, and ask the *honour* of her ladyship's company, and that of the Miss Carnegies, to tea this evening ; and if they canna come, ging to the Miss Mudies, and ask the *pleasure* of their company ; and if they canna come, ye may ging to Miss Hunter and ask the *favour* of her company ; and if she canna come, ging to Lucky Spark and *bid her come*."

A great confusion existed in the minds of some of those old-fashioned ladies on the subject of modern inventions and usages. A Montrose old lady protested against the use of steam-vessels, as counteracting the decrees of Providence in going against wind and tide, vehemently asserting, "I would *hae* naething to say to thae impious vessels." Another lady was equally discomposed by the



## Her Infinite Variety

introduction of gas, asking with much earnestness, "What's to become o' the puir whales?" deeming their interests materially affected by this superseding of their oil. A lady of this class, who had long lived in country retirement, coming up to Edinburgh, was, after an absence of many years, going along Princes Street about the time when the water-carts were introduced for preventing the dust, and seeing one of them passing, rushed from off the pavement to the driver, saying, "Man, ye're *skailin'* a' the water." Such being her ignorance of modern improvements.

There is a point and originality in the expressions on common matters of the old Scottish ladies, unlike what one finds now; for example: A country minister had been invited, with his wife, to dine and spend the night at the house of one of his lairds. Their host was very proud of one of the very large beds which had just come into fashion, and in the morning asked the lady how she had slept in it. "O vary well, sir; but, indeed, I thought I'd lost the minister athegither."

Nothing, however, in my opinion comes up to the originality and point of the Montrose old maiden lady's most "exquisite reason" for not subscribing to the proposed fund for organising a volunteer corps in that town. It was at the time of expected invasion at the beginning of the century, and some of the town magistrates called upon her and solicited her subscription to raise men for the service of the king—"Indeed," she answered right sturdily, "I'll dae nae sic thing; I ne'er could raise a man *for mysell*, and I'm no gaen to raise men for King George."

Some curious stories are told of ladies of this class, as connected with the novelties and excitement of railway travelling. Missing their luggage, or finding that some-









## The Tyrants

thing has gone wrong about it, often causes very terrible distress, and might be amusing, were it not to the sufferer so severe a calamity. I was much entertained with the earnestness of this feeling, and the expression of it from an old Scotch lady, whose box was not forthcoming at the station where she was to stop. When urged to be patient, her indignant exclamation was—"I can bear ony pairtings that may be ca'd for in God's providence : but I canna stan' pairtin' frae ma claes."

The following anecdote from the west exhibits a curious confusion of ideas arising from the old-fashioned prejudice against Frenchmen and their language, which existed in the last generation. During the long French war, two old ladies in Stranraer were going to the kirk : the one said to the other, "Was it no a wonderfu' thing that the Breetish were aye victorious ower the French in battle?" "Not a bit," said the other old lady, "dinna ye ken the Breetish aye say their prayers before ga'in into battle?" The other replied, "But canna the French say their prayers as weel?" The reply was most characteristic, "Hoot ! jabbering bodies, wha could *understan'* them?"

*Dean Ramsay*

Lady Holland      

### I

**S**HE was a very strange woman, whose character it would not be easy to describe, and who can only be perfectly understood from a knowledge and consideration of her habits and peculiarities. She was certainly clever, and she had acquired a great deal of information both from books and men, having passed her whole life amidst people remarkable for their abilities and know-

## Her Infinite Variety

ledge. She cared very little for her children, but she sometimes pretended to care for them, and she also pretended to entertain strong feelings of friendship for many individuals ; and this was not all insincerity, for, in fact, she did entertain them as strongly as her nature permitted. She was often capricious, tyrannical, and troublesome, liking to provoke, and disappoint, and thwart her acquaintances, and she was often obliging, good-natured, and considerate to the same people. To those who were ill and suffering, to whom she could show any personal kindness and attention, among her intimate friends, she never failed to do so. She was always intensely selfish, dreading solitude above everything, and eternally working to enlarge the circle of her society, and to retain all who ever came within it. She could not live alone for a single minute ; she never was alone, and even in her moments of greatest grief it was not in solitude but in society that she sought her consolation. Her love and habit of domination were both unbounded, and they made her do strange and often unwarrantable things. None ever lived who assumed such privileges as Lady Holland, and the docility with which the world submitted to her vagaries was wonderful. Though she was eternally surrounded with clever people, there was no person of any position in the world, no matter how frivolous and foolish, whose acquaintance she was not eager to cultivate, and especially latterly she had a rage for knowing new people and going to fresh houses. Though often capricious and impertinent she was never out of temper, and she bore with good humour and calmness the indignant and resentful outbreaks which she sometimes provoked in others, and though she liked to have people at her orders and who would defer to her, and obey her, she both liked and respected those who were

## The Tyrants

not afraid of her, and who treated her with spirit and freedom. Although she was known to be wholly destitute of religious opinions, she never encouraged any irreligious talk in her house. She never herself spoke disrespectfully or with levity of any of the institutions or opinions which other people were accustomed to reverence, nor did she at any time, even during periods of the greatest political violence, suffer any disloyal language towards the sovereign, nor encourage any fierce philippics, still less any ribaldry against political opponents. It was her great object, while her society was naturally and inevitably of a particular political colour, to establish in it such a tone of moderation and general toleration that no person of any party, opinion, profession, or persuasion might feel any difficulty in coming to her house, and she took care that no one who did should ever have reason to complain of being offended or annoyed, still less shocked or insulted under her roof. Never was anybody more invariably kind to her servants, or more solicitous for their comfort. In this probably selfish considerations principally moved her ; it was essential to her comfort to be diligently and zealously served, and she secured by her conduct to them their devoted attachment. It used often to be said in joke that they were very much better off than her guests.

*Charles Greville*

### II

**I** MET Lady Holland again on Thursday at Lord Sefton's. She began by complaining of the slipperiness of the courtyard, and of the danger of her horses falling ; to which Sefton replied that it should be gravelled the next time she did him the honour of dining there. She

## Her Infinite Variety

then began to sniff, and, turning her eyes to various pots filled with beautiful roses and all kinds of flowers, she said :—"Lord Sefton, I must beg of you to have those flowers taken out of the room, they are so much too powerful for me." Sefton and his valet Paoli actually carried the table and all its contents out of the room. Then poor dear little Ly. Sefton, who has always a posy as large as life at her breast when she is dressed, took it out in the humblest manner and said :—"Perhaps, Lady Holland, this nosegay may be too much for you." But the other was pleased to allow her to keep it, tho' by no means in a very gracious manner. Then when candles were lighted at the close of dinner, she would have three of them put out, as being too much or too near her. Was there ever?

*Thomas Creevey*

## XXX

### DEAD LADIES

DEAR dead women, with such hair too,  
What's become of all the gold  
Used to hang and touch their bosoms?  
I feel chilly and grown old.

*R. Browning*

To my ninth decade I have totter'd on,  
And no soft arm bends now my steps to steady;  
She, who once led me where she would, is gone,  
So when he calls me, Death shall find me ready.

*W. S. Landor*

#### Ballade of Dead Ladies



NAY, tell me now in what strange air  
The Roman Flora dwells to-day.  
Where Archippiada hides, and where  
Beautiful Thaïs has passed away?  
Whence answers Echo, afield, astray,  
By mere or stream,—around, below?  
Lovelier she than a woman of clay;  
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where is wise Héloïse, that care  
Brought on Abeilard, and dismay?  
All for her love he found a snare,  
A maimed poor monk in orders grey;

## Her Infinite Variety

And where's the Queen who willed to slay  
Buridan, that in a sack must go  
Afloat down Seine,—a perilous way—  
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where's that White Queen, a lily rare,  
With her sweet song, the Siren's lay?  
Where's Bertha Broad-foot, Beatrice fair?  
Alys and Ermengarde, where are they?  
Good Joan, whom English did betray  
In Rouen town, and burned her? No,  
Maiden and Queen, no man may say;  
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

### ENVOY

Prince, all this week thou need'st not pray,  
Nor yet this year the thing to know.  
One burden answers, ever and aye,  
“Nay, but where is the last year's snow?”

*François Villon (translated by Andrew Lang)*

Claudia Homonœa    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

I, HOMONŒA, who was far clearer-voiced than the Sirens, I who was more golden than the Cyprian herself at revellings and feasts, I the chattering bright swallow lie here, leaving tears to Atimetus, to whom I was dear from girlhood; but unforeseen fate scattered all that great affection of childbirth. How old? Two-and-twenty. And childless? Nay, but I left a three-year-old Calliteles—may he live at least and come to a great old age. And to thee, O stranger, may Fortune give all prosperity.

*J. W. Mackail (from the Greek Anthology)*

## Dead Ladies

Elizabeth L. H.

WOULD'ST thou hear what man can say  
In a little? Reader, stay.  
Underneath this stone doth lie  
As much Beauty as could die :  
Which in life did harbour give  
To more Virtue than doth live.  
If at all she had a fault,  
Be sure it's buried in this vault.  
One name was Elizabeth,  
The other, let it sleep with death :  
Fitter, where it died, to tell  
Than that it lived at all. Farewell !

*Ben Jonson*

Margaret Ratcliffe

MARBLE, weep, for thou dost cover  
A dead beautie underneath thee,  
Rich as nature could bequeath thee :  
Grant then, no rude hand remove her.

All the gazers on the skies  
Read not in faire Heaven's storie,  
Expresser truth, or truer glorie,  
Than they might in her bright eyes.

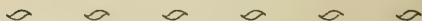
Rare as wonder was her wit,  
And, like nectar, ever flowing :  
Till time, strong by her bestowing,  
Conquer'd hath both life and it.

## Her Infinite Variety

Life whose grief was out of fashion  
In these times ; fewe have rued  
Fate in a brother. To conclude,  
For wit, feature, and true passion,  
Earth, thou hast not such another.

*Ben Jonson*

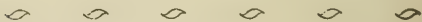
Margaret



IN shells and gold, pearls are not kept alone,  
A Margaret here lies beneath a stone ;  
A Margaret that did excel in worth  
All those rich gems the Indies both send forth ;  
Who, had she liv'd when good was lov'd of men,  
Had made the Graces four, the Muses ten,  
And forc'd those happy times her days that claim'd  
From her to be the age of pearl still nam'd.  
She was the richest jewel of her kind,  
Grac'd with more lustre than she left behind,  
All goodness, virtue, bounty, and could cheer  
The saddest minds. Now Nature, knowing here  
How things but shown, then hidden, are lov'd best,  
This Margaret shrin'd in this marble chest.

*William Drummond of Hawthornden*

Lady Marie



MARIE, Incarnate, Soule and Skin  
Both pure, whom Death not Life convinced of  
Sin,  
Had Daughters like seven Pleiades ; but She  
Was a prime Star of greatest Claritie.

*William Strode*



## Dead Ladies

Mrs. Mary Neudham    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

A S sinn makes gross the soule and thickens it  
To fleshly dulness, so the spotless white  
Of Virgin pureness made thy flesh as cleere  
As other soules : thou could'st not tarry heere  
All soule in both parts ; and what could it bee  
The Resurrection could bestow on thee,  
Already glorious? thine Innocence  
(Thy better shroude) sent thee as pure from hence  
As saints shall rise : but Hee whose bounty may  
Enlighten the greates sunn with double day,  
And make it more outshine itselfe than now  
It can the moone, shall crowne thy varnish'd brow  
With light above the sunn : when thou shalt bee  
No lower in thy place than majesty :  
Crown'd with a Virgin's wreath, outshining there  
The Saints as much as thou did'st mortals heere.  
Bee this thy hope ; and whilst thy ashes ly  
Asleepe in death, dreame of Eternity.

*William Strode*

Lady Mary Villiers    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

THE Lady Mary Villiers lies  
Under this stone : with weeping eyes  
The parents that first gave her birth,  
And their sad friends, laid her in earth.  
If any of them, Reader, were  
Known unto thee, shed a tear ;  
Or if thyself possess a gem  
As dear to thee as this to them,

## Her Infinite Variety

Though a stranger to this place,  
Bewail in theirs thine own hard case,  
For thou, perhaps, at thy return  
Mayst find thy darling in an urn.

*Thomas Carew*

Anne Walton    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

HERE lieth buried as much as could die of Anne, the Wife of Izaak Walton, a woman of remarkable prudence, and of a primitive piety ; her great and general knowledge being adorned with such true humility, and chastened with so much Christian meekness, as made her worthy of a more memorable monument.

She died (alas, that she is dead !) the 17th of April, 1662, aged 53.

Study to be like her.

*Epitaph in Worcester Cathedral*

Mrs. Margaret Paston    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

SO fair, so young, so innocent, so sweet, }  
So ripe a judgment, and so rare a wit, }  
Require at least an age in one to meet. }  
In her they met ; but long they could not stay,  
'Twas gold too fine to mix without allay.  
Heaven's image was in her so well exprest,  
Her very sight upbraided all the rest ;  
Too justly ravish'd from an age like this,  
Now she is gone, the world is of a piece.

*John Dryden*

## Dead Ladies

Mrs. Corbet    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

HERE rests a woman, good without pretence  
Bless'd with plain reason, and with sober sense :  
No conquests she but o'er herself desir'd,  
No arts essay'd but not to be admir'd.  
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,  
Convinc'd that virtue only is her own.  
So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,  
So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd ;  
Heav'n, as its purest gold, by tortures try'd ;  
The saint sustain'd it, but the woman died.

*A. Pope*

Ternissa    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

TERNISSA ! you are fled !  
I say not to the dead,  
But to the happy ones who are below :  
For, surely, surely, where  
Your voice and graces are,  
Nothing of death can any feel or know.

Girls who delight to dwell  
Where grows most asphodel,  
Gather to their calm breasts each word you speak :  
The wild Persephone  
Places you on her knee  
And your cool palm smoothes down stern Pluto's cheek.

*W. S. Landor*

## Her Infinite Variety

Rose Aylmer    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

AH, what avails the sceptred race,  
Ah, what the form divine !  
What every virtue, every grace !  
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.  
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes  
May weep, but never see,  
A night of memories and of sighs  
I consecrate to thee.

*W. S. Landor*

Hester    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

WHEN maidens such as Hester die  
Their place ye may not well supply,  
Though ye among a thousand try  
With vain endeavour.  
A month or more hath she been dead,  
Yet cannot I by force be led  
To think upon the wormy bed  
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,  
A rising step, did indicate  
Of pride and joy no common rate  
That flush'd her spirit.  
I know not by what name beside  
I shall it call :—if 'twas not pride,  
it was a joy to that allied,  
She did inherit.

## Dead Ladies

Her parents held the Quaker rule,  
Which doth the human feeling cool ;  
But she was train'd in Nature's school,  
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind ;  
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind ;  
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,  
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before  
To that unknown and silent shore,  
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,  
Some summer morning,  
When from thy cheerful eyes a ray  
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,  
A bliss that would not go away,  
A sweet forewarning ?

*Charles Lamb*

### Under the Violets



**H**ER hands are cold ; her face is white ;  
No more her pulses come and go ;  
Her eyes are shut to life and light :—  
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,  
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,  
To plead for tears with alien eyes ;  
A slender cross of wood alone  
Shall say, that here a maiden lies,  
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

## Her Infinite Variety

And gray old trees of hugest limb  
Shall wheel their circling shadows round  
To make the scorching sunlight dim  
And drink the greenness from the ground,  
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,  
And through their leaves the robins call,  
And, ripening in the autumn sun,  
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,  
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the mourning choir shall sing  
Its matins from the branches high  
And every minstrel voice of Spring,  
That trills beneath the April sky,  
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,  
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,  
Her little mourner, clad in black,  
The cricket, sliding through the grass,  
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

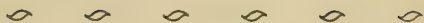
At last the rootlets of the trees  
Shall find the prison where she lies,  
And bear the buried dust they seize  
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.  
So may the soul that warmed it rise !

If any, born of kindlier blood,  
Should ask, what maiden lies below ?  
Say only this : A tender bud,  
That tried to blossom in the snow,  
Lies withered where the violets blow.

*O. W. Holmes*

## Dead Ladies

My Kate



SHE was not as pretty as women I know,  
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow  
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden ways,  
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—  
My Kate.

Her hair had a meaning, her movements a grace ;  
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face :  
And when you had once seen her forehead and mouth,  
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth—  
My Kate.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,  
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke :  
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,  
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone—  
My Kate.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act  
As a thought or suggestion : she did not attract  
In the sense of the brilliant or wise : I infer  
'Twas her thinking of others, made you think of her—  
My Kate.

She never found fault with you, never implied  
Your wrong by her right ; and yet men at her side  
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town  
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown—  
My Kate.

## Her Infinite Variety

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall ;  
They knelt more to God than they used—that was all :  
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you  
    meant,  
But the charm of her presence was felt where she  
    went—

My Kate.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,  
She took as she found them, and did them all good ;  
It always was so with her—see what you have !  
She has made the grass greener even here . . . with her  
    grave—

My Kate.

My dear one !—when thou wast alive with the rest,  
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best :  
And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part,  
As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet  
    Heart—

My Kate?

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

Charlotte Locker



HER worth, her wit, her loving smile,  
    Were with me but a little while.  
She came, she went—yet, though that voice  
Is hush'd that made the heart rejoice,  
And though the grave is dark and chill,



## Dead Ladies

Her memory is fragrant still—  
She stands on the Eternal Hill.  
Here pause, kind soul, whoe'er you be,  
And weep for her and pray for me.

*Frederick Locker*

Lady Louisa Conolly    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

BEFORE the day came when it would be necessary to place her remains in the coffin the poor labourers and others of the town (Celbridge) wished to be allowed to see the body, to which I, of course, consented. I watched, from a recess where I could see without being observed, the various persons as they came in singly and went to the bed where she lay, with a countenance so serene, so beautiful, that you could scarce believe she was not alive ! As every poor person, after seeing her, passed on to another room and (not seeing me in the recess) conceived himself alone and unobserved, I had full opportunity of watching their natural feelings ; and if ever gratitude for benefits conferred and the deep affliction, nay, I may say despair, for the loss of a parent were depicted in the countenances of any human being, it were so in the countenances of these poor Irish Catholics !

One old white-headed man took up her cold, lifeless hand, and kissing it, on his knees sobbed out, " Oh, my dear, my sweet lady, my long-tried, my only friend, why have you left your poor old creature to die alone ? You, that used to come to his bedside when he was sick, and cheer him up with your good word, and give him the drop of soup and the bit of meat, and tell him to have comfort ; and now you're gone before me after all !

## Her Infinite Variety

But I'll not stay long ; I'll follow you, for you'll clear the way for a poor old sinner like myself, and God will receive me from you." Then he crossed himself, placed her hand gently down, kissed it again, and with his face streaming with tears, he tottered out of the room.

Another much younger man, after gently and in the most feeling, delicate, and respectful manner taking up her hand to kiss, knelt down in the attitude of prayer, and looking up towards heaven, with a countenance bedewed with tears but full of the most devotional expression, exclaimed aloud, "The priest may tell me what he likes. He may curse the heretic, and swear the Protestant goes not to heaven ; but neither priest, nor bishop, nor all the priests that ever lived, shall persuade me that my sainted lady, that lies now dead before me, is not gone to heaven and rests at peace in the bosom of a just and merciful God ! No, no ! If the soul of our dear, sweet Lady Louisa, the poor man's friend and comforter, is not gone to heaven, then there is no God, no mercy for the human race ! Protestant, Catholic—what is it but a name ? But look at her ; look at the tears of the poor, the old, the young, the infirm and helpless ; and—and—tell me, ye priests, if these are not her passports to heaven ? Yes, you are cold and lifeless, and hear not the wailings of those whom you cherished as your children ; but your bright spirit is above, and will look down upon us, who have now no friend left since you are gone."

Various other instances I saw of this genuine feeling of love, gratitude, and deep sorrow for the loss of their friend and benefactress, who had just closed a life *sixty years* of which had been devoted to the poor of Celbridge and spent actually in their society, for very seldom was she more than three months out of the year

## Dead Ladies

away from Castletown, and often for years together without ever being three days away.

At last the melancholy morning came when her earthly remains were to be taken to their last home. As soon as daybreak appeared the people began to assemble in the park in front of the house, and by the time all was ready many thousands were assembled, for the *poor* came in numbers from every part of the county, and many from other counties also, thirty and forty miles off, so well was she known and so highly beloved and lamented. There is a great stone staircase leading up to the hall-door of Castletown House. Before these steps the multitude were collected, patiently and mournfully waiting to see the coffin come out. I ordered the great door to be thrown open, and the procession moved from the hall towards the door. The moment the body appeared every hat was off, every eye intently fixed upon the coffin. One long, loud cry of despair issued from the assembled multitude. The next instant all was silent as death, and every being on their knees, their hands clasped in prayer, and their heads bowed in submission to the will of their Creator who had thought proper to strike this heavy blow. In this attitude all remained till the body reached the bottom of the steps, and the procession was again formed, the Duke of Leinster chief mourner, accompanied by my brothers and myself, and all the gentry for miles round, the coffin borne by her own labourers, who had begged "I would not let her be placed in a hearse, but carried on the *shoulders* of those whom she *supported* in her life, and who would willingly have sacrificed theirs to preserve hers." Upon the word to move forward the people rose from their knees ; again issued forth that one loud cry of grief, and we moved on

## Her Infinite Variety

without noise or wailing except from the sobs of the women (this being so contrary to the custom of the Irish it made a deep impression on us all). When the clergyman met us at the church door and commenced the burial service, again the hats were off, and this Catholic multitude were on their knees, in fervent sincere prayer for the soul of their Protestant friend. We had then to proceed a long way through the town to the old ruined church where the family vault was, a deep silence continuing the whole way ; and when arrived, and the coffin was lowered into the tomb, again that thrilling cry was heard, but louder and longer than ever, and a general rush was made to the vault, each striving to get a last look at the coffin which contained the remains of one they almost revered as a saint. My poor sister had followed in a carriage, being determined to go down into the vault before it was closed and hid from her for ever the being she most loved on earth. I thought it would be impossible, in the wretched state in which she was, to get her through the dense mass of people which obstructed the way from her carriage to the vault. However, the moment I said, "My friends, here is my sister who wishes to go and see the last of her aunt ; you all know her, and how they loved each other ; I know how you pity and feel for her ; pray make way for her to pass." The reply was, "O God ! is it our dear Miss Emily ? Oh, may the Great Father of mercy look down on you, you poor creature ! Sure it's you that's to be pitied afore us all. Make way for the poor darling child of her we loved," and in an instant all was silent, and a clear broad way opened for her to pass to the tomb, into which she descended. After some time I gently led her away, and ascending the steps, she again passed through the people, who had not moved but waited her

## Dead Ladies

return ; and as she moved along leaning on my arm, her heart almost ready to burst with convulsive sobs, they tried to soothe and cheer her with every endearing expression of affection, and love, and gratitude, calling on her to remain with them and not leave Castletown ; that they had only her left now, and if she left them what was to become of them? In short, I never witnessed such sorrow, such gratitude, such respect, such a display of every kind feeling that is so conspicuous in the Irish peasant when called forth by the remembrance of kind and just treatment from those in affluence and above them in society.

To be able to judge of Lady Louisa Conolly's character, and the reverence in which she was held by the whole of Ireland, it was necessary to have lived at Castletown during her life and to have witnessed her funeral after her death. She had been mistress of Castletown for sixty-five years, the whole of which long period was one continued scene of charity and benevolence. Her manners were truly noble ; no affected condescension, but the plain simple sweetness that beamed in her fine countenance was reflected in her manners, and all derived their source from the same fountain of Christianity and meek humility which sprang spontaneously from her heart. I never knew her equal ; neither did I ever meet one who formed a clearer or sounder judgement on all difficult questions, or was more just in her perception of character. All the sentiments and views she has so often expressed to me, both of public occurrences and individual character and conduct, have been completely confirmed in every instance, and her perfect simplicity of religion and unbounded tolerance on that subject were extraordinary. With regard to affection for her friends and relations, it

## Her Infinite Variety

is only necessary to say that if misfortune, sorrow, or difficulty of any kind happened to any of them, Lady Louisa was at their side. Selfishness was what she had no idea of ; I really do think she could not *understand* its meaning, so free was she from it ; in short, I can only describe Lady Louisa Conolly's character by saying, that if it were possible (which it is not) to have the counterpart of Christ upon earth she was His image.

*Sir George T. Napier*

## CONCLUSION

Alma Mater    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪    ♪

O MOTHER earth, by the bright sky above thee,  
I love thee, O, I love thee !  
And yet they say that I must leave thee soon ;  
And if it must be so,  
Then to what sun or moon  
Or star I am to go,  
Or planet, matters not for me to know.  
O Mother Earth, by the bright sky above thee,  
I love thee, O, I love thee !

O, whither will you send me ?  
O, wherefore will you rend me  
From your warm bosom, mother mine ?—  
I can't fix my affections  
On a state of conic sections,  
And I don't care how old Daedalus  
May try to coax and wheedle us  
With wings he manufactures,  
Sure to end in compound fractures,  
Or in headers at right-angles to the brine—  
O Mother Earth, by the bright sky above thee,  
I love thee, O, I love thee !

## Her Infinite Variety

I cannot leave thee, mother :  
I love thee, and not another ;  
And I can't say "man and brother"  
To a shadowy abstraction,  
To an uncomfortable fraction,  
To the skeletons of quiddities,  
And similar stupidities.  
Have mercy, mother, mercy !  
The unjustest *novercae*  
Sometimes leaves off her snarlings  
At her predecessors' darlings ;  
And thou art *all* my mother,  
I know not any other.  
O Mother Earth, by the bright sky above thee,  
I love thee, O, I love thee !

So let me leave thee never,  
And cling to thee for ever,  
And hover round thy mountains,  
And flutter round thy fountains,  
And pry into thy roses fresh and red ;  
And blush in all thy blushes,  
And flush in all thy flushes,  
And watch when thou art sleeping,  
And weep when thou art weeping,  
And be carried with thy motion,  
As the rivers and the ocean,  
As the great rocks and the trees are—  
And all the things one sees are—  
O Mother, this were glorious life,  
This were not to be dead.  
O Mother Earth, by the bright sky above thee,  
I love thee, O, I love thee !

*T. E. Brown*



## POSTSCRIPT

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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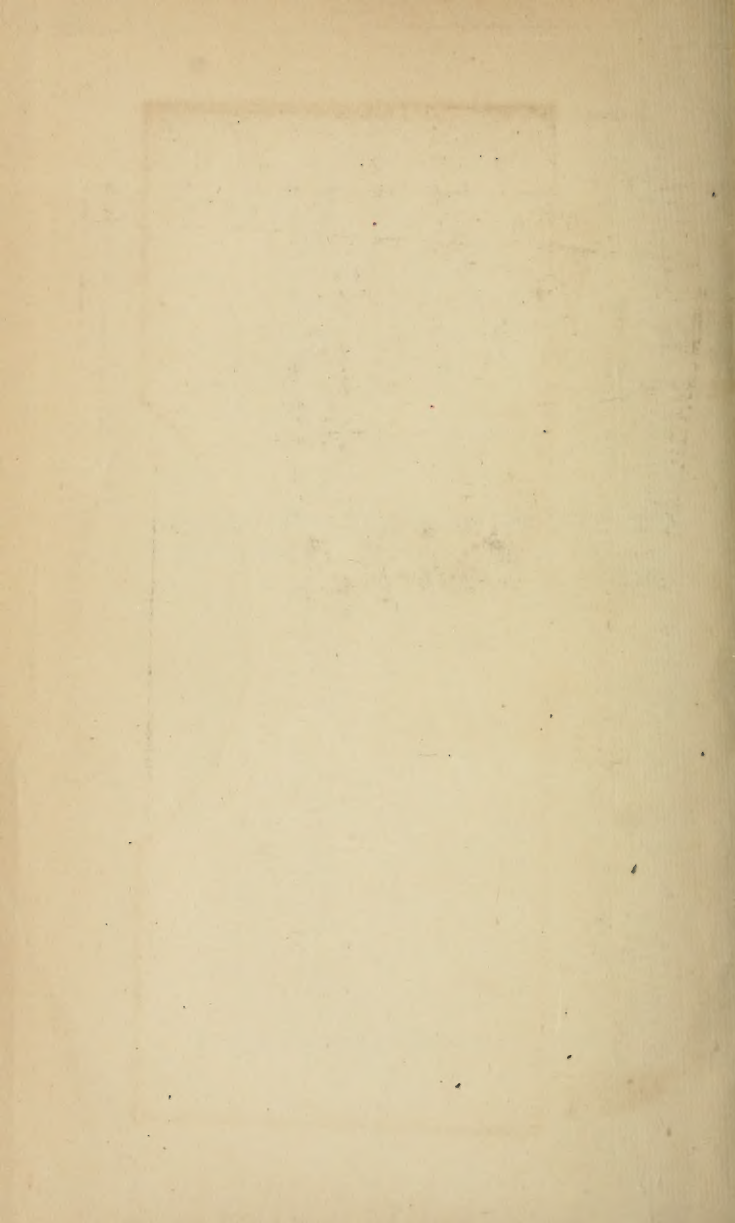
E. V. L.

August 1908.

Good-night, ladies ; good-night, sweet ladies : good-night, good-night.

*Hamlet*





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